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ABSTRACT

In fulfillment of their federal mandate to support and develop the capacity of states to deliver educational appraisal and programming services to handicapped children, the Northeast Regional Resource Center and the New York Regional Resource Center conducted the Northeastern Conference for School Social Workers, in Saratoga Springs, New York on November 19, 20, and 21, 1975. This publication contains the proceedings of that Conference. Conference sessions provided school social workers with the opportunity to exchange information and ideas on philosophy and practice, as well as to prepare position papers on selected areas in the field of school social work. The following topics were discussed: identification, assessment, and programming for handicapped preschool and kindergarten children; identification and assessment of the special needs of students in public schools; establishing priorities and strategies for social work service in public schools; social work function in the mainstreaming of handicapped children; team concepts in appraisal and programming; parent involvement in the education of their children; reporting and recording of school records; and social work at the elementary, junior, and senior high school levels. Also included are an evaluation of the conference, and names and addresses of conference participants and the planning committee. (Author/RM)

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Saratoga Springs, New York
November 19-21, 1975

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INTRODUCTION

In fulfillment of their federal mandate to support and develop the capacity of states to deliver educational appraisal and programming services to handicapped children, the Northeast Regional Resource Center and the New York Regional Resource Center conducted the Northeastern Conference for School Social Workers, held in Saratoga Springs, New York on November 19, 20 and 21, 1975.

The Northeast Regional Resource Center and the New York Regional Resource Center are part of a network of thirteen centers implemented by the United States Office of Education, Bureau of Education for the Handicapped (BEH) under Public Law 91-230. The Northeast Regional Resource Center serves the following states: Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Rhode Island and Vermont. The New York Regional Resource Center, a single-state region, serves the State of New York.

The Regional Resource Centers were established to assist states to develop educational services for handicapped children. Their activities include: developing new educational appraisal and programming models as well as improving exisiting models; providing diagnostic services for selected, referred children, and consultative services to develop program prescriptions for such children. In addition, the Centers in conjunction with State Departments of Education conduct in-service training seminars for educational personnel relative to current information in assessment and programming.

The Regional Resource Centers held the Northeastern Conference to provide school social workers the opportunity to exchange information and ideas on philosophy and practice, as well as to prepare position papers on selected areas in the field of school social work. This activity was intended as a means to increase competencies and expand awareness of options in appraisal and programming for handicapped children. Producing and disseminating this monograph which contains the papers of the ten workshop groups is seen as a means of sharing current thinking and activity in the field with others in the northeast region.

The conference had a task analysis format which involved participants in a group process where with the aid of a facilitator, they had the opportunity to interact, share ideas, analyze specific areas of concern and render suggestions for improved services to handicapped children. On the basis of submission of a preliminary abstract, ninety school social workers were selected to attend the conference. The majority of participants were from Connecticut, New Jersey and New York. Included as well were representatives from Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Rhode Island. Participants worked in one of ten workshop groups which addressed itself to a specific area of school social work practice.

The outline suggested for each workshop group included three major areas:

1. Description of current services and programs, including a discussion of present needs and functioning levels, as well as gaps in service delivery.

2. Selection and description of at least three high priority goals for

services.

3. Discussion of strategies which should be utilized to implement the goals described.

The process was approached in varying ways by the ten groups.

- Some groups divided up the tasks immediately, and gave individuals specific responsibilities. Periodically they reconvened in a total group, or in sub-groups, in order to confer, revise and analyze the work.

- Others approached the task as a total group so that each person was involved in the entire process. In these cases, all members discussed, refined, and wrote the paper together.

- Still others spent part of the time discussing and defining the issues to reach a general consensus, then made assignments and divided into groups.

The result of these distinct and separate efforts are ten papers, each dealing with a specific topic, and each written in a unique style with varying emphasis on philosophy and practice.

The variety of topics discussed indicate the multi-facets, and the several dimensions which social work practice must address itself to. The topics also imply that it is essential for social work practitioners to play a variety of roles within the school system, and develop more efficient channels of communication and cooperation with the community.

The roles of the school social worker are dynamic in that they are subject to change as systems and institutions shift emphases and revamp priorities. Thus it is the responsibility of each professional to constantly assess and reassess these systems in order to determine the most effective and feasible methods of meeting the needs of children in the educational system.

The functioning of the school social worker in school systems, though quite eclectic in terms of specific job roles, can be discussed in terms of two broad categories: 1) appraisal functions and 2) intervention and rehabilitation functions. Appraisal functions are those activities related to the diagnosis, identification and assessment of specific characteristics and needs of pupils. Intervention and rehabilitation functions are those activities geared toward the treatment and remediation of these special needs. The relationship of these two functions to each other, and to the basic mandate of school systems to determine and provide for the individual needs of all students both handicapped and non-handicapped, is, indeed, a significant one.

From this frame of reference we can draw implications in terms of social work philosophy and practice. In the evaluative process social work philosophy deals with a child as a total entity whose psycho-social functioning is an integral part of his cognitive functioning. These functions are inextricably linked, so that any diagnostic assessment of a child must include an evaluation of his skill in both areas. This philosophy dictates that social work input is essential on any diagnostic team involved in the psycho-educational assessment of children.

The intervention and rehabilitation function of school social workers needs clarification and definition, particularly in view of the fact that clinicians and special educators alike are grappling with the issue of where diagnosis ends and intervention begins. Along with this concern is the question of who is responsible for translating diagnostic data into educationally relevant programs, and the manner in which such intervention will occur. These areas must in some way continue to be addressed by school social work practitioners.

The ten papers in this monograph are in no way definitive statements on the State of the Art, but rather the result of collective discussions on specific topics of current involvement in school social work. They are intended as a means of sharing professional knowledge and concerns as an impetus to further thought, discussion and action.

IDENTIFICATION, ASSESSMENT AND PROGRAMMING FOR HANDICAPPED PRESCHOOL AND KINDERGARTEN CHILDREN

A discussion of the importance of early assessment and intervention, parent and community involvement and supportive legislation.

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IDENTIFICATION, ASSESSMENT AND PROGRAMMING FOR HANDICAPPED PRE-SCHOOL AND KINDERGARTEN CHILDREN

I. Underlying Philosophy

We believe that schools are responsible for providing services to meet the educational needs of all children. As school social workers we are committed to a developmental approach in identification, assessment and programming for handicapped children. We believe that all children should be helped to reach their fullest potential in as normal an environment as possible. Because such a large part of a child's development occurs before school age, earlier identification of handicapping conditions and appropriate educational planning are vital. This can only be accomplished by a comprehensive community effort involving both parents and professionals in the appropriate areas of medicine, mental health, education and other disciplines to meet the special needs of individual children and their families.

II. Existing Practice

At this point in time there exist many public and private community programs which address themselves to the various needs of pre-school children. Many public schools likewise are currently serving handicapped pre-school and kindergarten students. However, social work intervention varies in terms of age level because of differences in state mandates as to when special services are offered to young school children.

III. Factors Affecting Programming

In reviewing present needs and gaps in the provision of services for young pre-school and kindergarten children we recognize the following critical factors which affect educational programming:

A. The age level in which intervention is mandated for public schools varies from state to state. There is need for a much earlier intervention with earlier recognition of handicapping conditions.

B. Adequate funding likewise needs to be mandated to assure consistent and comprehensive early planning and intervention. Another facet of the problem is the existing non-comprehensive approach to identification, assessment, and provision of services.

C. Centralized planning and continued administrative supports are needed, not only to establish programs for very young children but to assure their continuing operation.

D. There is a need for recognition of the necessity for organized staff training and development to ensure sufficient numbers and quality of staff.

E. There is a need for ongoing evaluation of programs for young handicapped children. Additional assessment tools must be created to modify and develop new programs to meet the children's needs.

F. Information in the field of early childhood needs to be synthesized, organized, and disseminated.

G. The utilization of a greater number of professionals in the identification, assessment, and evaluation process is necessary. Their focus should be not only to categorize children according to their handicaps, but also to provide individualized educational prescriptions.

H. Attention must be given to support services for any basic educational team such as sufficient clerical staff, adequate office space, equipment and materials, transportation vehicles, and possibly other special facilities such as resource rooms.

I. Too often there is a communication gap between programs of community agencies and the school system, pointing up a public relations problem.

J. There is a serious shortage of Spanish and other non-English speaking professional personnel to undertake a valid study of the child or to teach the child. Recently, there has been some progress in the area of bilingual education across the nation. The implemented "Aspira Consent Decree" has brought numerous non-English as well as bilingual classrooms into New York City. Unfortunately, this service has not yet been extended to any appreciable degree to the special child who needs it most. There is a need to train staff, develop non-discriminatory assessment instruments and construct programs and curricula.

K. Parent involvement on a continuing basis must be an integral part of the programming for the young child. Parents need feedback and support, along with a demonstration of materials and teaching techniques. They should also be made fully aware of their rights as parents and the rights of their children.

IV. Other Related Factors

There are several factors that have significant impact upon the difficulties of the very young handicapped child. Existing societal values and attitudes have discouraged early intervention in the process of nurturing and mothering. Traditionally, the child up to age six has been in the mother's very own and untouchable domain. At the same time, while parental difficulty in coping with the adolescent is understood, parental inability to deal with the very young child is regarded with less sympathy. These factors may serve to inhibit parents from seeking help, thus often preventing early intervention.

Although there is now a growing concern among our legislators for that part of our population which has special needs, government priorities still do not favor education, therefore adequate funding and support for programs serving preschool handicapped children remain lacking.

Another significant factor impeding the helping process for the very young child is the tendency to focus on the academic disabilities of the older child. As a result, the help given so far has been mainly remedial rather than preventive and seemingly is given only when the special needs become too obvious to be ignored. Fortunately, there is a changing focus towards a developmental approach to the needs of the younger child.

There is a pressing need to develop staff with specialized skills to prescribe for multiply and severely handicapped youngsters such as the deaf-blind, severely emotionally disturbed, the hearing handicapped, and the learning disabled child with above average intelligence. The non-English speaking child with one or more of these other deficits must struggle under a double handicap.

Lack of coordinated community planning is another factor adversely affecting the helping process. Progress in that area is evident in state-mandated administrative procedures which are beginning to emerge. However, before community planning can begin, school recognition of community programs for young children must become a reality. In addition, the community must also become aware of resources within the schools. Both community agencies and schools have tended to perceive an innovative helping plan as a threat to their power structure. Development of trust, hopefully, is under way through improved public relations work. Pilot and demonstration programs requiring cooperation have been established in many communities in a number of states.

V. Administrative Priorities

We see a need to provide a comprehensive screening mechanism to identify children with special needs. We are dealing here with a wide spectrum of needs beginning with the need for parent training and support, preventive intervention and remedial programming.

We recognize the importance of establishing a system in each community or school whereby early identification of handicapped children is made available. Specifically those professionals who are needed to maintain such a program are pediatricians, neurologists, orthopedists, psychiatrists, social workers, learning disabilities specialists, psychologists, and speech and language specialists. When appropriate, child development or other experts should be consulted.

The social worker can contribute to the identification process in the following ways:

1. Coordinating and facilitating the team process.
2. Reaching out and establishing a relationship with the family.
3. Assisting the family in understanding and accepting their child's special needs by helping them to overcome obstacles such as guilt, frustration, fear of the unknown, fear of embarrassment, etc.

4. Providing a social and developmental history to be used as a diagnostic tool.
5. Interpreting findings and providing feedback to both family and team members.

Systematic follow-up is vital. Periodic re-evaluation and programming should remain with the initial team until another agent or agency assumes that responsibility. For example, in Staten Island, New York, two children's Developmental Centers currently evaluate pre-schoolers, offer the necessary help to parents and children, and maintain the cases in their agencies until the children become of school age. Thereupon,the children are referred to the New York City Board of Education's Evaluation and Placement Unit for further study and determination of special school placement, if indicated.

VI. Proposals and Strategies

We feel there is a great need for parental involvement with school staff in the total process of referral, assessment and program planning. The degree to which parents are to be involved may need to be decided and implemented through legislation; otherwise it may not exist.

We believe every child will grow and learn if expectancies are carefully matched with the child's abilities and preparedness. No longer can the mental health profession or a school staff service a child on its own. Community acceptance, involvement, and cooperation are key factors in gaining a total commitment in behalf of children.

An early determination must be made by school systems and community agencies as to the human, physical, and monetary resources required to cooperatively serve young children. It is clear that a permanent system of funding must be created to be directed toward the special needs of children.

Because of varying abilities of local communities and school districts to support these programs, state and federal funds must be appropriated initially and continued in many states on a long range basis.

VII. Summary of Factors

The following is a summary of factors perceived by school social workers to ensure an adequate educational experience through early identification, assessment, and remediation for young children with special needs.

A. Community leadership in identifying needs and planning of programs to meet the needs of very young handicapped children.

B. Availability of state funding, preferably federal or state on a long range basis.

C. Maintaining cooperating working relations and understanding among community agencies, including public schools dealing with handicapped children.

D. Development of a well trained staff with an appropriate staffing pattern.

E. Adequate physical plan, equipment and materials.

F. Early and continuing parent involvement, particularly with the non-English speaking parents.

G. Standardizing the team approach and various steps in evaluation, re-evaluation, prescription, and instruction of very young children.

H. Availability of specialists and consultants from medical, educational, and social work agencies to assist staff.

I. Development of infant identification programs initiated by hospitals in local districts with referrals to community agencies which would follow the child's growth and development from birth. This type of program would ensure early identification at the preventive level and provide a continuum of community services with planned transition from one program to another as the child develops.

J. Organization and dissemination of information pertaining to the field of early childhood.

IDENTIFICATION AND ASSESSMENT OF THE SPECIAL NEEDS OF STUDENTS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

A discussion of three areas of functioning which require needs assessment: the child's personal development, conditions in the schools, and conditions in the community.

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IDENTIFICATION AND ASSESSMENT OF THE SPECIAL NEEDS OF STUDENTS IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

There is no consensus among educators, social workers and other personnel in public schools about the definition of special needs of pupils, or about whose responsibility it is to assess these needs. It is a primary premise of this paper that since education is a responsibility that is shared by the school, home and community, a cooperative effort is essential in the assessment of pupil needs.

It is the second basic premise of this paper that the role of social workers in schools is particularly suited to facilitating the assessment of needs and planning change. As facilitator, the social worker assumes the responsibility for creating the structure and climate necessary to involve maximum feasible participation of other key persons in this process.

VALUES

Before needs can be assessed, it is important to make explicit the values and clarify the goals on the basis of which this assessment is made.

Social workers in schools contribute a perspective which values the development of the whole child. This includes physical, emotional and social growth as well as intellectual development. It presumes that academic and creative achievement cannot be separated from the quality of a child's interpersonal relationships with significant adults and peers in his environment. The most recent research on intellectual functioning has confirmed the experience of educators and social workers alike that socialization practices have a direct impact on children's intellectual potential as well as creative achievement.[1] Thus, the educational system has a primary responsibility for creating a climate within schools which supports the development of the whole child.

If schools are to carry out their total commitment, they are mandated to assess the sum total of a pupil's educational needs in the home and the community as well as in schools. They need to be advocates for the rights of each child to have basic environmental supports necessary for each individual's full development in a socially adaptive role. Major studies have shown that when conflict exists between the goals of home and school, the best school programs fail to achieve their objectives.[2]

SOCIAL WORK ROLE IN NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The social worker in schools as a facilitator for assessment coordinates what information is to be gathered for a comprehensive and effective evaluation of a given school situation.

Existing structures within schools may be utilized, or when necessary, the social worker assists in establishing ad hoc and permanent structures to involve other key persons in the assessment process.

The development of a climate in the school, in which open communication between different levels of personnel is possible, is another factor essential to the valid assessment of needs.

While the administrator is the person with ultimate responsibility for determining the quality of the school environment, the social worker has specific professional knowledge, skills and values which can facilitate the open communication and shared problem solving basic to an optimum learning environment.

It is equally important to provide for continuing feedback and evaluation as essential elements of a comprehensive assessment if schools are to continue to adapt to changing needs and conditions.

GOALS OF ASSESSMENT

It is suggested that a comprehensive assessment of the special needs of pupils should identify the strengths as well as the weaknesses of a pupil's learning situation. This should be done in each of three areas:

1. the individual child's physical, emotional, social and intellectual development
2. conditions in schools (policies, practices, expectations, opportunities and resources) which affect pupil's learning and development including the quality of communication between home and school
3. conditions in the community (expectations, opportunities and resources) which affect education

CONDITIONS IN SCHOOLS

In view of the constraints of time, under which this paper was written, the remainder is focused on an analysis of the conditions in schools which should be assessed in determining the special needs of pupils. This, in no way, should be construed as a denial of the importance of the other two factors previously mentioned, the needs of individual pupils and the conditions in the community, which are important in making a total assessment. However, it seems most appropriate to be concerned with the area of conditions in schools since social workers have more direct impact here and as there is a need to clarify their role in this area.

It is important to strive for some professional consensus concerning those guidelines which can be used in a systematic way to identify conditions in schools which affect students' functioning. We need to begin by delineating those factors in schools which support learning as well as those which handicap learning.

The following four factors have been identified as critical areas for assessment:

1. Pupil role
2. Parent role
3. Staff role
4. Administrative role

We are concerned with roles because we know that the way in which persons interact in schools affects the way and the extent to which students are able to learn. Roles are defined as actions and expectations of persons in specific positions in the school situation.

PUPIL ROLE

The pupil role in schools is concerned with those attributes that are shared by all pupils or by groups of pupils that comprise the student population. These qualities must be distinguished from the unique traits of individual pupils.

The following factors have been identified as four significant aspects of the pupil role which have to be assessed in determining needs of students:

1. Cultural characteristics: specific ethnic backgrounds, socio-economic differences, religious or political affiliations shared by groups of students which affect attitudes toward learning.

2. Quality of interaction: among groups of students as well as between students, staff and administration: cooperation and support or strains and conflicts between different groups are forces that militate for or against learning.

3. Teacher expectations: a significant body of research has shown that there is a direct relationship between student performance and teacher expectations.

4. Opportunities for students to participate in decision making: Studies have shown that at appropriate levels, student involvement in planning and evaluation of programs directly affects motivation and

and commitment to learning.[3]

PARENT ROLE

The following factors have been identified as significant aspects of the parent role which have to be assessed in determining the needs of students:

1. Cultural characteristics: the impact of specific ethnic backgrounds, socio-economic differences, religious or political affiliations on school-home relations: studies have shown that these characteristics affect the values and attitudes which students bring to school. When these are supportive of school goals, programs are more effective; when there is conflict or competition between home and school expectations, learning is inhibited.[4]

2. Quality of interaction among groups of parents, as well as among parents, staff, administrators or other pupils: discrimination, conflict or tension among groups of parents and others in and out of school have a negative impact on the learning situation. Cooperation and support have positive effects. Parents need to be involved to the extent that they can contribute their skills and their unique knowledge of their children to the development of school programs. Yet, careful clarification of roles is necessary to prevent interference with the achievement of formal educational objective.

3. Parent involvement in decision making: the extent to which parents are involved in assessing needs and are given the opportunity to

participate in making decisions about planning, implementing and evaluating school programs enhance commitment and minimize resistance to changes in programs. Parents and special interest groups who act as advocates for children's needs can develop support bases for school programs in the community.

STAFF ROLES

The following areas have been identified as important aspects of the staff role that need to be assessed in determing needs of students:

1. Staff relationships

   a) Peer faculty relations: Do teachers share ideas, materials and concerns? What is the impact of formal teacher organizations on teaching practices and on pupil teacher relationships? Are there alliances among staff that support teacher efforts? Are there cliques that inhibit cooperation?

   b) Relations between regular classroom teachers and special service personnel: Do they function as a team or do they operate independently? Are services integrated? Do they respond to the needs of the whole child?

   c) Relations between professional and non-professional staff: What are the relations among aides, para-professional, clerical and custodial staff? Do the different levels of services in the school building support each other, act independently, compete or conflict with one another?

2. Teacher-parent relationships: Are there regular procedures for communicating with parents? Is contact crisis oriented? Are there opportunities for recognizing pupil strengths as well as weaknesses?

3. Staff involvement in decision making: Does staff participate in assessing needs and planning and implementing policies and practices? Is staff involved in feedback and evaluation of programs?

ADMINISTRATIVE ROLE

No one's role is more crucial in the school than that of the principal. It is his style that sets the tone for the school. More than any other person, he is responsible for the climate and quality of communication among staff, parents, students, and others. He has the power to share decision making or to dictate policy and practices. Little change is possible without his sanction. However, as schools have become larger organizations requiring adaptation to changing populations, principals themselves have recognized that not only students and families need to change, but also the conditions in the school's policies and practices. In addition, the administrator's own relationships with staff, parents and students may need to change if they are to meet the needs of different pupil populations. Different groups may respond more readily to a more informal style, encouraged by "drop-in" facilities. Parents may require baby sitting services and transportation in order to participate in school programs. Administrators will need help in identifying the specific needs of specific groups.

Aspects of the administrative role which need to be assessed in terms of their effect upon children's learning are complimentary to the issues which have already been discussed, and can be identified as follows:

1. Administrative style: a cooperative rather than a hierarchical style encourages involvement of staff, parents and students in assessing needs as well as planning and evaluating programs.
2. Quality of communication: administration, staff, parents and students need to have open channels of communication in order to develop the potential of all persons in the school situation.
3. Decision making: a principal's willingness to listen and share decision making helps mobilize resources for change and reduces resistance to change.

Up to this point, we have focused primarily on what needs to be assessed. There remains for consideration the methods and techniques of assessment as well as the mechanisms or structures through which assessments are made and the resources necessary to implement programs. Within the limitations of this paper, we can only suggest alternate methods, structures and resources for assessment.

METHODS OF ASSESSMENT

Methods of assessment familiar to the school social worker include: direct observation, interviews, small group discussions, large group meetings, consultation, collaboration and employment of newer techniques such as, values clarification, classroom meetings, role playing and feedback.

MECHANISMS OF ASSESSMENT

The structure through which assessments become possible may be set up initially on an ad hoc basis to involve all key persons mentioned previously. When they exist or prove to be workable, they should be made permanent to allow for the continuing feedback and evaluation which make on-going adaptation to change possible.

Four basic elements of a comprehensive structure for assessment of needs in schools as well as for further planning are suggested as follows:

1. Interdisciplinary team: work groups of interdisciplinary staff in schools to identify needs and plan programs.
2. Parent linkage groups: parent staff committees, groups or organizations through which parents are involved in assessing needs.
3. Classroom meetings: meeting with teachers and students to involve both in needs assessment and program planning.
4. Staff development programs: different levels of staff may need to develop new skills necessary to changing functions.

MONETARY RESOURCES

Before it is possible to consider what additional funds are required to implement programs, it is essential to set aside time to reorder priorities and develop new skills, in assessing needs within schools and the community.

While it is unrealistic to assume that more effective programs can be achieved without appropriate funds, it is possible that if priorities are reset, and other persons in the system can be trained to develop skills in helping individual students, costs will not be out of proportion to current expenditures and outcomes will be more effective.

CONCLUSION

It is the conviction of the writers of this paper that an on-going reassessment of needs is essential to the planning and implementation of all programs if schools are to continue to adapt to the varying needs of students in a changing society.

The objectives of this paper were two-fold. First was to identify three areas of functioning in which needs have to be assessed if the goal of a comprehensive assessment of the special needs of students in public schools is to be achieved:

1) the individual child's personal development
2) conditions in schools including the interaction between school and homes
3) conditions in the community including the interaction between school and community group resources

The second objective was to examine more specifically the impact of four roles that affect conditions in schools:

1) The pupil role
2) The staff role
3) The parent role
4) The administrative role

This paper is in no way intended to be an all inclusive or definitive statement. Hopefully, it serves as an additional step in identifying those areas which need to be considered in making a comprehensive assessment of the needs of pupils and clarifying some of the major factors which should be examined.

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ESTABLISHING PRIORITIES AND STRATEGIES FOR SOCIAL WORK SERVICE IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

A discussion of the process whereby school social workers assist school administrators to develop priorities and strategies for improved delivery of educational services. Among the priorities identified are the following: working toward humanizing schools, improving service delivery, and providing for objective evaluation of social work services.

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ESTABLISHING PRIORITIES AND STRATEGIES FOR SOCIAL WORK SERVICE IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

School social workers can no longer work exclusively on an individual basis with a limited number of students. Instead, they have had to develop other techniques and ways of working in order to meet the increasing demand for their services and to have some impact on the causative factors of school dysfunction.

School social work has often been viewed as a nebulous profession requiring skills which have been largely unspecified and using methods which have not been fully articulated. Evaluation of service was done either in statistical terms - number of referrals, interviews, home visits, contacts with teachers, etc., or through subjective judgements as to whether students were "cured" or "adjusted" by the social worker. Establishing priorities provides a more specific basis for evaluating the effectiveness of school social work practice. This, in turn, should lead to increased accountability.

The task of this group was to discuss and conceptualize the process whereby school social workers negotiate with school administrators to formulate priorities and to develop strategies for implementation. After examining a variety of concerns and possible approaches, a process evolved including the following steps:

1. Developing a statement of school social work philosophy

2. Defining the role of the school social worker
3. Identifying gaps in role perception
4. Formulating goals for school social work
    a. listing multiple possible goals
    b. synthesizing these goals
    c. identifying major goals
5. Setting priorities
6. Creating strategies to implement priorities

PHILOSOPHY

As school social workers we need to be as explicit as possible about our philosophy. Do we feel that all individuals (students, parents, teachers, social workers, administrators) have a right to self-determination - to make informed choices based on alternatives? Do we believe in the worth of each individual, and do we accept people as they are? What are our own values, and how do these affect our functioning as social workers? Is the purpose of school social work to facilitate learning, to provide therapy, to adjust the school to the child, to adjust the child to the school? Do we believe in shared decision-making at all levels? Are evaluation and accountability an integral part of school social work?

Although we came from various geographic locations and have had various historical and legislative definitions of our role, our group attempted, through a process of brain-storming, to find elements of philosophy common to all of us. Basic to social work philosophy is an acceptance of individuals as they are, regardless of race, culture, intellectual ability, physical or emotional handicaps. Recognizing that we all have our own values, school social workers attempt to understand and interpret the conflicting values present in any system. We endeavor to help the system (individual, group or organization) formulate choices appropriate to the situation. When a child is in trouble, one has to deal with the environment as well as with the child. Honest and open communication is essential, though often in conflict with values of confidentiality requiring selective sharing of information.

School social workers do not offer formulae for solving problems but recognize the value of the process necessary for growth and change to occur. Such an experience results in developing and internalizing skills which can then be applied repeatedly in diverse problem-solving situations.

School social workers believe in shared decision making on various levels. This includes all those (administrators, staff, students, and parents) who will be affected by decisions made in the following areas: alternative educational planning, curriculum development, mainstreaming, grading, and tracking. School social workers believe that schools should provide a nurturing environment, where children like to be and where teachers like to teach. Therefore, educational planning should include affective as well as cognitive considerations.

THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKER

There is great variation in school social workers' expectations in regard to their roles. However, our group was able to achieve consensus about major areas. Primary among these is that of child advocate - to help the child develop and use his social, emotional, and intellectual resources. In order to accomplish this, the school social worker expects to draw on a variety of roles and resources, according to the particular needs of individual children. The school social worker identifies factors supportive or detrimental to the child's development. This requires diagnosis and evaluation of the total situation: child, school, home and community, and involvement of all individuals and systems affecting the child. In helping parents, the social worker may assume the role of advocate, counselor, and interpreter of the child's needs and of the school's policies and beliefs. Often, help is offered to school personnel by interpreting the dynamic interrelationship between emotions and learning, through consultation with teachers individually and through in-service training.

The school social worker expects to be part of a team working in the child's behalf, a team that includes administrators, teachers, representatives from pupil personnel services and parents. Beyond this, there is a contribution to be made of the knowledge of community resources, appropriate referrals, and help in the development of those resources that are lacking. When a need for change is identified, the school social worker contributes to policy change and the development of alternative education as an innovator in developing programs to meet both general and specific needs. This is especially important in providing programs for handicapped children.

GAPS IN ROLE PERCEPTION

Gaps in role perception have a variety of origins. Sometimes the educator's view is that the primary role of the social worker is to "make" parents, students, or teachers alter their behavior in keeping with administrative standards. Often the administrator's definition is unrealistic both in terms of volume of work and achievable goals. There is wide variation on the part of both administrators and school social workers in the acceptance of social work input regarding policy-planning and decision-making. However, there are opportunities to utilize know-how, to work behind the scenes to effect change by understanding power systems and by using human relations skills. There are gaps in the field of social work itself as exemplified in the differences within a school social work department in terms of skills, commitment, competence, philosophy, and readiness for needed change.

FORMULATING, SYNTHESIZING AND IDENTIFYING MAJOR GOALS

Because the school reflects the community's standards and attitudes, the goals of education are endless. There are, however, central themes to which educators address themselves. Many of these are in congruence with social work philosophy and have been sanctioned by both educators and school social workers.

As our group began listing goals of social work practice in the schools, it became clear that setting priorities would be essential to our task. It would have been unmanageable to attempt to articulate strategies for all the goals mentioned. Some of the many goals suggested were:

-Prevention as well as remediation
-Children valuing themselves and others
-Developing more effective discipline practices
-Teaching "parenting" skills
-Teaching students, parents, and teachers how to negotiate systems
-Maintaining effective communication between child, parent and school
-Having those affected involved in decision-making
-Helping schools become more relevant
-Offering leadership in in-service training
-Innovating change
-Improving delivery of service to handicapped children
-Expanding team delivery of service
-Evaluating quality of service

PRIORITIES

These goals were synthesized, and three priorities were identified:

1. Our first priority should be working toward humanizing schools. Schools serve children, and educators should be obliged to establish a comfortable, flexible environment which will stimulate imaginative and creative learning.
2. Our second priority is improving our delivery of social work service through explicating our role definition, and through deepening our skills through in-service training, reading, and continuing education.
3. It is increasingly necessary for school social work to validate its service, to demonstrate its effectiveness, and to justify its presence in the school through objective evaluation.

HUMANIZING THE SCHOOL

The humanizing of schools is a priority since it touches all the other areas of learning and affects the very existence of the child within the school and in the wider community. The aim of a humanized school is to create an atmosphere where both children and teachers feel comfortable and where learning how to learn is infused in the curriculum. This concept is basic to social work philosophy in that it values each individual and furthers each person's capacity for self-actualization.

In a humanized school,children and staff are taught to value themselves and others. Such an atmosphere makes learning valuable both in the present and for the future. It emphasizes the relevancy of what is being taught. The school social worker in such a setting is a vital partner in teaching skills for negotiating with the system. Promoting shared decision making is a key part of humanizing the school. Unless people feel that they have a role in controlling their lives, their belief in and support of a system will not be realized.

One step toward achieving humanization of the school is an examination of the school's discipline procedures. "Discipline" can be defined as a process whereby children can learn inner controls in a supportive climate. Such a system provides a framework of predictable and reasonable consequences through which children can function alone and in groups. An examination of present discipline procedures too often reveals the following: self-fulfilling prophesy of failure for a core group of students; punishment which is externally imposed, capricious, arbitrary, excessive, and non-differentiated; and misbehavior which is reinforced through ridicule and/or excessive attention. The most visible child is often the most frequently disciplined, thus making him even more visible. Among the problems in implementing effective disciplinary procedures are large classroom size, inconsistency in carrying out procedures, unilateral decision-making, and community attitudes.

Another key to achieving the goal of a humanized school is in the area of communication defined as containing the elements of mutual trust, freedom to verbalize, ability to understand feelings, objective listening skills, and objectivity in dealing with issues rather than personalities. Present practice in many schools can be described as emotional, reactive, and highly selective regarding information shared. Fortunately, there are increasing instances of trust, and more attention is being paid to the need for shared communication which employs consciously applied skills. Negative factors affecting communication include inconsistently applied policies of confidentiality, lack of accessibility of team members for discussion and planning, lack of trust, lack of skill in communicating, and lack of acceptance of the parents' and children's "right to know".

Self-esteem, self-acceptance, and regard for others are essential components for achieving a healthy school environment. Present practice too often indicates a climate of bias, one in which academic performance is equated with morality which further classifies students as successes or failures. The educational setting should teach skills aimed at helping the individual to develop his own values. Factors which negatively affect the development of self-esteem are the attitudes of adults and peers, difficulty of articulating and discussing values, and a lack of consensus on values.

IMPROVING SERVICE DELIVERY

The more effective delivery of school social work services is another priority. It is essential that school social workers define and demonstrate their own role and competencies. Emphasis on prevention as well as remediation, an expanded concept of team decision-making, and a definition of skills unique to social workers will expedite efficient delivery of school social work services. As gaps in perceptions of school social work are examined and brought to consensus, on-going work with administrators and teachers will be facilitated. This will allow for innovative and responsive service delivery.

EVALUATION OF SOCIAL WORK SERVICES

Our third priority is the development of better methods of evaluating the quality of services performed by school social workers. Assessment of services which are geared primarily to affective issues is difficult but not impossible. Some instruments of measurement have been developed, but the need for further work in this area is indicated. Interpretation of priorities and goals to those in the system who share in the team process can be of great value. Explicit, written behavioral objectives developed by school social work departments and by individual social workers provide a basis for further evaluation. This process tells whether and to what extent achievement of objectives have been realized. This is a new and difficult area for many social workers, but it is essential that we demonstrate our accountability not just to ourselves but to school administrators, co-workers in the educational system, and to the community at large.

STRATEGIES

In discussing how to implement and achieve priorities, we again were aware that process was more important than specific techniques or methods. Our priorities must dovetail with those of the school and be acceptable to administration and staff. Trust and open communication are essential elements. Social workers must draw upon their understanding of the school as a social system, identify and assess accurately the power structure, the decision-making process, and the sources and strength of support. Social workers must decide how to approach these sub-systems, and how to establish coalitions to further their objectives. Options need to be kept open at all times and, if and when initial intervention strategies for change are rejected, they must be re-evaluated and new strategies devised.

School social workers must constantly assess and utilize the strengths of the school system. Thus, as they seek to pursue a particular objective, groundwork must be laid over a period of time. During the orientation stage, social workers will ask questions of administrators and other professional staff, thereby beginning to engage their interest. They will collect and utilize data relative to current concerns and will share that information with co-workers to enlist their support.

School social workers must take the initiative for defining their goals in measureable terms and meet with administrators to establish their performance objectives and to gain their advice and acceptance. When the school social worker's goals can facilitate the achievement of administrator's goals, there is a likelihood of acceptance and support. During this developmental state, workers will also be delineating the methods for achieving these goals, the measures to be used to evaluate progress, the possible constraints, and the projected needs for assistance.

An important strategy for achieving a goal as global as humanizing the school is to break this down into specific, manageable sub-goals. Success in one small area provides encouragement and enhances the possibility of success in dealing with larger, more difficult problems.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The task of our group was to discuss and conceptualize the process whereby school social workers negotiate with school administrators to formulate priorities and create strategies in order to bring about changes in the school setting. This process reflects the values of the writers, presenting a philosophy, describing present practice, postulating the ways administrators perceive the school social work role and the way that role is perceived by school social workers. The process also included formulating and synthesizing goals, setting priorities, and finally, creating strategies to facilitate implementation of these goals. Conceptualizing the process is an arduous exercise, but experiencing the process allows one to both approximate successful completion of the task and to expand cognitive capabilities. The setting of priorities should be a conscious dynamic process which is an integral part of the school social work role.

SOCIAL WORK FUNCTION IN THE MAINSTREAMING OF HANDICAPPED CHILDREN

A discussion of three methods of implementing the mainstreaming concept: prevention, sustaining and returning. In addition, three goals for service are described: maximum utilization of social systems, parent involvement, and adequate support services.

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SOCIAL WORK FUNCTION IN THE MAINSTREAMING OF HANDICAPPED CHILDREN

INTRODUCTION

This paper was written in three parts. Part I presents an overview of the role of the school social worker, with particular emphasis on the action concepts: prevention, sustaining and returning. Part II states the three major goals of the school social worker in the field and Part III outlines proposed strategies to achieve these goals.

PART I

In order to address this topic area adequately, we must first establish a frame of reference from which we will review the activities and involvements of School Social Workers. We feel that mainstreaming is a means to achieve the integration of handicapped students in our society. Specifically it involves providing educational services to children in an environment closest to the regular classroom, while still providing for each student's individual and special needs. Any child who requires special assistance to achieve his/her optimum potential because of an emotional, social academic, or physiological condition shall be considered a handicapped child.

For School Social Workers, then, there is a committment to assist in achieving the most appropriate placement of handicapped children in the educational system. The vehicle for achieving this is the provision of adequate support systems. School Social Workers are involved both by providing direct services and by assisting in the provision of other services.

We as School Social Workers, see mainstreaming operationalized within the context of three action concepts: prevention, sustaining and returning. In discussing sustaining and returning, the concept of levels will be used.

"Levels" refers to the existence of a variety of placement situations for students. Each level represents a setting which is increasingly removed from the mainstream or regular classroom placement. The following is a listing of the various placement alternatives arranged on a continuum of educational services:

Mainstream - Regular School Setting, Program and Schedule

(Level I)	Regular School Setting/Resource Room Program/Supplemental Instruction
(Level II)	Regular School Setting/Special Class
(Level III)	Special Class Program
(Level IV)	Special Day School
(Level V)	Special Resident School
(Level VI)	Hospital

PREVENTION

The School Social Worker is keenly aware of, and concerned about, the need for the provision of preventive and early identification programs and services for children with handicapping conditions. In our view, we have unique skills and abilities that are required in the delivery of such services, and therefore, School Social Workers should be involved in the numerous programs and processes that are directed toward the prevention and early identification of children with special needs.

Where a special needs condition already exists, the School Social Worker plays a key role in the process of early identification. The total child must be viewed and within his/her total environment. By virtue of their training the School Social Worker is actively involved in this process. The identification process is not done quickly or easily. Most often it involves a multitude of variables and conditions, activities and processes. School Social Workers can play an important part in helping to coordinate these services, and assisting parents and children negotiate the "identification system".

Starting from birth and throughout the pre-school years, the School Social Worker should be involved in preventive activities and operations such as improving parent-child relationships, assuring adequate nutrition, preventing home accidents, and educating parents about their children's growth and learning. The programs may take the form of parent education groups, modeling demonstrations, or role playing. School Social Workers should be involved in the process of preventing the development of handicapping conditions.

We must also keep in mind that when the child enters school, the need for prevention and early identification of possible handicapping conditions continues. The need for School Social Work involvement continues into the school setting. Though some of the forms of involvement may well be as previously discussed in relation to the pre-school years, there are others that warrant note in this phase. School Social Workers should participate with other educational personnel and parents on curriculum committees, policy making committees, and other advisory groups to assure optimum mental health practices.

SUSTAINING:

Depending upon the practice in the given state or community, a review body studies the medical, clinical and other data assembled on a given child, and makes a determination of eligibility for special educational services. This review body may be a Committee on the Handicapped, Clinical Review Board, Child Study Team, etc., but its functioning is very similar.

After a School Social Worker has obtained a detailed social history and assisted in the compilation of data, it may then be another worker or supervisor who will actually sit on the review body. That person will assist the body by providing information on socio-emotional factors which are important in making a determination of the best placement for a child at a given time. This placement would necessarily be tailored to the child's needs at the moment, and would provide for a situation which would be closest to the regular classroom placement. The point we wish to stress is that a School Social Worker should be involved in both compiling the data and in sitting on the committee that reviews same.

In the school the School Social Worker should work with the teacher and other support personnel to develop a psychosocial-educational prescription for each child. Because of the School Social Worker's involvement with the family and community, she/he can provide invaluable insights into the child's total needs. Each team member has a role to play in carrying out this prescription. The child's progress in each area would signal the need for revision of the prescription.

It is the School Social Worker's role to effectively communicate the child's socio-emotional needs to school administrators, and to give specific suggestions as to how they may best be met. Through personal contacts, professional groups and community action she/he also influences policy and decision making by local and state Boards of Education and legislative bodies.

The parents of special children need the guidance of the School Social Worker in becoming involved in parent groups, and in understanding and accepting their child's problems so that their feelings of inadequacy and guilt can be lessened. They are thus freed to move in positive ways to recognize and build on the strengths of their children through our support.

With other parents, there should be an ongoing program directed towards understanding the variety of needs of the handicapped child, and the importance of providing educational opportunities for them. Whenever possible, meaningful interaction between these two groups of parents should be encouraged. This helps both the parent and the child to learn to accept human differences.

Implied throughout these sustaining roles is the important concept that the entire process is child-oriented. Whenever possible, the special needs students should be involved in the decisions made on his behalf. In addition, the other students must be helped to understand, and then accept these special needs students with support from the School Social Worker.

RETURNING:

The School Social Worker is present to assist in evaluating possible alternatives, and to advocate a placement for the child that will be as close to the mainstream as possible.

Within the returning concept, the focus is on preparing for children's placement closer to the mainstream. School Social Workers should be involved with both the "sending" and the "receiving" teachers, and the support staff of both facilities in order to promote a readiness and willingness to accept returning children. Social workers should be involved in gaining support for the philosophy of mainstreaming, the in-service preparation of regular classroom teachers, and the passage of legislation that would both support the idea and help finance it.

In working with handicapped children and their parents the Social Worker can assist the child and his family to make a good adjustment to the change.

In working with nonhandicapped students and their families the School Social Worker can develop an understanding of handicapping conditions and promote an attitude of acceptance.

Many factors are involved in the implementation of a mainstreaming concept. We feel the five major factors which have impact on success or failure are:

1. Attitudes
2. Legislation and Funding
3. Resources
4. Training
5. Evaluation and Research

ATTITUDES

It is recognized that the mainstreaming of the special needs student may arouse considerable anxiety among school personnel (administrators, teaching faculty, supportive staff), community residents, parents and students. The development of positive attitudes by school personnel, community residents, parents and students will help a child to be sustained or returned to a more normalized school environment.

LEGISLATION and FUNDING

Legislation and funding are necessary for the implementation and continuation of mainstreaming attempts. It is necessary for the School Social Worker to be aware of the need for, and availability of funds. It is also necessary for the School Social Worker to be aware of the possible misuse and abuse of funds.

Today with the strong emphasis on mainstreaming and on reduced school budgets, School Social Workers, as advocates for children, must not allow mainstreaming to be employed as an economical rather than a therapeutic method for meeting students' needs.

RESOURCES

In every school district and community there are numerous resources both human and material. School Social Workers should assist in maximizing the use of existing resources and in developing new ones.

TRAINING

To insure maximum impact on mainstreaming, ongoing training of the School Social Workers is necessary. In addition, it must be recognized that we should assume some responsibility for developing in-service training programs for teachers and other school personnel.

EVALUATION and RESEARCH

Professional and scientific evaluation of mainstreaming attempts is critical to the expansion and development of the committment. We must assess its strengths and weaknesses to learn what really works and what doesn't. What is really needed in order for an attempt to be a success? Evaluation may well provide the answer. It will assist implementation, and in many cases provide modification.

PART II

GOAL I: Maximum utilization of social systems (educational, other social reosurces, legislative/political), for the benefit of handicapped children.

Within the educational system we must see that there are distinct groups: teachers, principals, school district administrators, and school boards. Though the school is the most accessable system and open to achieving maximum utilization, all groups are not successfully involved so that the full potential of the total system to help these students remains untapped. School Social Workers have had some impact with teachers and principals, and should continue to work on that level as well as to expand these efforts with the planners and policy makers. They should work toward having the system design and support activities that would allow for ongoing evaluation and prescription for children with special needs.

The goal is to get the entire system to respond in a coordinated positive way to the needs of handicapped children.

With respect to the other social resource systems we see that due to different priorities there are great variances in the delivery of services. In order to deal with these discrepancies we must get into the community, and articulate to the various agencies the needs of handicapped students.

As far as the legislative/political system is concerned, we must study and learn its structure and complexities. We must learn how to make maximum use of it to benefit those children with special needs. Presently, many of us are working with parent and community groups, and this must be continued and expanded. School Social Workers should be aware of present legislation in this area, and should work to have these fully implemented. In general, we must become more knowledgeable and involved with this system, and work towards getting it to serve the best interests of these students. We caution that merely securing certain diagnostic labels via legislative action should not be construed as an end in itself.

GOAL II: Total involvement of parents with the educational system in order to implement and facilitate mainstreaming.

Currently School Social Workers are involved in numerous activities related to this goal. These would include:

- working with groups of parents
- helping organize parent organizations
- referring parents to outside agencies
- providing service to a family as a group
- providing parent training (PET, etc.)
- outreach efforts

As we see the present situation, there is not enough parent involvement on the broad scale, and if anything, there is a great diversification of effort. A system of parent advocacy must be developed. Parents require training and knowledge in order to negotiate and have impact on the system. School Social Workers shoud be there to assist them. Many school systems now see such involvement as necessary and helpful, therefore, administrative support is bound to vary depending on the present situation in a given school district. Also, we must strive to have such involvement legitimized and sanctioned where it presently does not exist.

GOAL III: Ensure the success of the mainstreaming effort, adequate support services must be given to children with special needs.

Present types of school social work service available are:

Individual Casework

Group Work

Family Group Therapy

Classroom Observation and Recommendations

Peer Group Counseling

Follow-up on Medical Problems

Utilization of Community Resources

Advocacy for Child in His Community

These services are not available to all children in all districts. The problem is that there are not enough personnel to deliver these and other support services.

PART III

Now, how do we propose going about achieving the goals we have offered?

GOAL I: To maximize the utilization of social systems (educational, other social resources, legislative/politcal) for the benefit of handicapped children, we propose the following steps:

1. Develop legislative frameworks and strive for their implementation.

2. Secure funds from present and future laws.
3. Train present personnel to their maximum potential.
4. Provide training programs in School Social Work, colleges and universities.

GOAL II: To accomplish more parent involvement we propose the following steps:

1. More in-service training regarding parents' rights and due process.
2. Meetings with parents and administrators.
3. Form "Study Groups" to research models to effective parent participation and disseminate this information to the systems involved.

GOAL III: To ensure the success of the mainstreaming effort, adequate support services should be provided to children with special needs. To accomplish this goal we propose the following steps:

1. Advocacy! We must continue to interpret and document to our educational colleagues, other professionals and the total community that children with special needs can make it in the mainstream if provided with the necessary supports.
2. Provide more program options and alternatives.
3. Provide additional school social work staff.

TEAM CONCEPTS IN APPRAISAL AND PROGRAMMING

A discussion of interdisciplinary approach in planning for handicapped students. Included are factors influencing team functioning both internal and external as well as goals for maximizing the potential for team service.

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TEAM CONCEPTS IN APPRAISAL AND PROGRAMMING

The team concept has evolved from an historical base of existing mental health delivery models. It refers to various professional staff functioning in an interdisciplinary approach. School social workers may be part of such a collaborative effort which utilizes a shared, professional expertise to identify, diagnose, classify, plan for and place the handicapped or learning disabled student. This team approach can be effective in considering the needs and impact of the broader social systems which include the family, the school and the community.

The collaborative effort finds its rationale in a perspective which avoids fragmentation by drawing together all the components necessary for sound decision making. The quality of service to the handicapped pupil is enhanced as specialized information from various disciplines is considered. Providing an eclectic approach to problem solving avoids the limited focus of one discipline.

Teams are currently structured in a variety of ways existing on a continuum from a one dimensional unit to a formalized multi-disciplinary team. Some teams may perform only functions of identification, assessment and prescriptive planning while other teams will consider remediation, prevention, on-going involvement, community activity and education, advocacy, curriculum planning, program development and the fostering of mental health concepts in the schools.

In this position paper, which advocates the establishment and development of team practice as essential for service to the handicapped child, all the above mentioned functions are held to be within the responsibility of teams. Failure to perform in these areas constitutes serious gaps in service. Local, tri-state and regional conferences of school social workers have highlighted the inabilities of some professionals and teams to perform these functions on a uniform and generally accepted basis.

Legislation directing the establishment and operation of such teams appears vital. With support of such a mandate, communities should encourage administrative authorization and commitment to a team approach. This would provide for effective appraisal services for handicapped children.

Resistance to teams may be attributed to: the possibility of overlapping services, the belief that "shared" responsibility will not necessarily be assumed, and the fear of a possible change in administrative controls.

Other factors influencing team functioning include:

1. Social, economic and political conditions within the school and the community.
2. Lack of clear guidelines for corollating the ratio of students to staff.
3. The number and types of special services, programs and resources available.

External factors mentioned above influence both the formation and possible accomplishments of the team. However, its own internal deficiencies may foster reduction in impact. Indeed, the structure and organization of a team determines its vitality. A team organized along hierarchical relationships may suffer diminished collaborative effort. Rigid role definitions and restrictions of decision-making inhibit open communication and problem solving. The severe and chronic nature of some handicapped students' difficulties, and the limited tangible resolutions of such problems may influence team morale and satisfaction.

Professional status consideration, often affected by salary, training and education, may limit team functioning. Unclear role conceptions, self-determined or imposed by other team members can be obstructions in the path of team realization. Rivalries, ambiguities and expectations take the place of an integrated approach to decision-making.

Team leadership is necessary for guidance and coordination so that communication within the team and with administration takes place along open, well-defined planes. Goals must be set for the team in conjunction with its own philosophy and that of administration.

The concept of "teams" in philosophy and application has yet to be adequately defined and implemented in schools. Current practice, reported by school social workers from several states varies greatly both within a particular state and among the several states. Unclear mandates for team establishment have contributed to lack of definitive operational procedures. In many areas teams do not exist and a single professional is often left to perform appraisal functions without the benefit of other professional input.

Three goals which have been identified in relation to the concept of teams in appraisal and programming are the following:

1. Development of a legal mandate.
2. Effective internal team functioning.
3. Integration of the team within the school.

The Mandate

Team establishment should be mandated as a prerequisite for effectively meeting the needs of handicapped children in the schools. Such a mandate should provide for the team's core composition to represent the areas of education, psychology, social work and medicine, e.g., learning consultant, school psychologist, school social worker and school physician/nurse. Teams should be expandable and flexible enough so that they may include other school personnel, parents and community specialists as needed.

It is recognized that to obtain such a mandate in areas where it is presently non-existent, educational efforts will be necessary. It is incumbent upon professionals in education to advance the team concept within the field and to gain support for its existence from the community. Information provided to parents and other community members regarding the roles of various team members is a means of gaining support. As a team member the school social worker is in a position to utilize community involvement and knowledge to communicate concerns and establish goals in service areas.

The mandate which may help alleviate the unevenness of today's practice can be accomplished through education, social action and demonstration of team effectiveness. The commitment of local, state and federal resources in support of the establishment of teams, must include guidelines for team functioning, adequate financial and human resources and reasonable time lines in which teams can operate.

Team Functioning

Optimal team functioning is a second goal to be achieved in order to provide quality services to handicapped children in the schools.

The team working with the handicapped child must proceed from a humanistic philosophical base. As such, the team makes its decisions democratically, members consulting and collaborating with each other rather than working in a hierarchical relationship. Decisions and recommendations can be made via concensus which permits movement without eliminating differing points of view. In order that the team operates in an egalitarian manner, the coordinator may be identified from within the group; his role defined by the team which further determines how it will function. Operational procedures may be delineated by the team in such matters as frequency, length and place of meetings and assignment of specific tasks. The team coordinator, accountable to administrators for the team's work, directs and guides the group toward attainment of mutually agreed upon goals.

As the major responsibilities of the team are considered, i.e., identification, assessment and prescriptive planning, it is necessary that the team be capable of providing for individual needs of children. At the same time, the team must hold itself responsible to recognize and generalize common needs so that comprehensive goals may be considered and defined.

Resources required to operationalize a team presuppose a financial commitment to support salaries, materials and programs. Human resources include sufficient specialists in each school to assess pupils' academic, psychological, social and medical needs and the supportives services for implementation. The interdisciplinary approach works well when team members are secure in their professional identity, are well-trained and flexible, capable of risk taking and sound judgement. The commitment to the team concept has been mentioned before but needs reinforcing as it underlies the ability to be part of a team.

The team member possesses a dual identity, initially as a specialist within a particular discipline and comprehensively as a team member aware of common goals which involve a collaborative effort. The individual expertise in roles and tasks may be delineated and developed as the team unifies toward problem solving and program planning. The team may expand to include temporary members who will provide specialized information or perform specific tasks.

To assure effectiveness of team functioning, periodic evaluation at several levels is essential. Continuous evaluation of the differential skills of specialists and of their role as team members accompanies the team's evaluation of its own processes. Evaluatory criteria include assessment of the team's performance and relationship to other systems within the school and the responsiveness and effectiveness of service levels to students, families and the community. Evaluation must be on-going, performed internally and externally and measurable in part by expressed satisfaction of teacher, parent and team members. The team which pursues a regular reevaluation of objectives and strategies, recognizes that it is a role model for other systems and can be seen as a micro-system of school-community-pupil relations.

An Integral Part of the School

The rationale for developing the team as an integral part of the school is the belief that cooperative efforts of all involved in the educational process will enhance the delivery of services to handicapped children. In bringing to the team knowledge of personality development, person-situation perspective and an ability to assess community resources, the school social worker can be instrumental in helping the team address itself to a more complete understanding and utilization of the school's resources.

The accessibility of the team and its inclusion into the life of the school can promote better communication between the students, the school and the community. Accessibility implies a physical presence of basic team members in schools. Proximity of team members to each other and to other school personnel enhances opportunities for immediate response to need or crisis. Accessibility projects the team into view so that it can be a model of school-community-student relations in all its aspects of group decision-making, flexible role-definition and open communication.

As an "extension" of the school, team involvement consists of initiating and participating in programs related to needs of children such as pre-kindergarten screening, parent-team workshops, teacher-team workshops, resource rooms, student tutoring programs, and workshops with specific team members and school personnel. Involvement can consist of team members working together with teachers, nurses, guidance counselors, principals or other team members in various capacities. Interviews with teachers and parents, consultations with other appraisal team members, in-service training and consultations with resource room teachers and other specialists are other areas of involvement.

As the team becomes accessible, visible and involved in the total educational process, it can be considered a working model by others in the school community. Professionals capable of handling conflicts, decisions, and problems within their own team can utilize and promote these skills with others including the family, faculty, administration and the community.

While a mandate has been listed as a primary objective, it may not take place until the integrated functioning team provides the model and impetus for permanent establishment. The mandated team may be a team in name only, utilizing professionals on a case basis, discouraging team dynamics from occurring. Such a minimum which follows the letter of the law may prevent the other goals from being realized. Such a team cannot consider its function as fulfilled since there is no true commitment to a collaborative effort. A team which performs legally required tasks only, but is not school based and is not involved in follow-up, cannot be sensitive to the needs of the school or the community.

There is a need to mandate the existence of regular school based teams employed on a full time basis to ensure that comprehensive services for handicapped children will be given. In addition, this mandate must provide for realistic guidelines for team functioning, adequate financial and human resources, and reasonable timelines in which teams can operate. Team functioning also rests on the incorporation of the team with school services. This provides for maximum response to the appraisal and programming needs of handicapped children.

The strategies for achieving these goals must be employed simultaneously and related specifically to situational problems. A process of self-examination by teams and others can determine at which point in the continuum they presently exist. Assessment, education and action are required for the team's actualization. The school social worker, because of expertise in group processes and familiarity with collaboration and consultation practices, is a natural catalyst for change and growth. This professional is charged to consider the interdisciplinary team as part of the field of practice and to utilize developed skills to fulfill the role of school social worker.

A singular value of an open, flexible team concept is in its extension into an open, adaptable school. The philosophy, knowledge base and functional process of the team concept is valid and has positive impact upon the psychol-social, academic and medical needs of youth.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN THE EDUCATION OF THEIR CHILDREN

A discussion of the historical basis for parent involvement and the role of the school social worker in facilitating the process. Specific roles described include: increasing parent aptitudes, developing a cooperative relationship between parents and the school system, and initiating community outreach programs.

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PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN THE EDUCATION OF THEIR CHILDREN

The emergence of a strong parental role in the education of their children is an outgrowth of many divergent and powerful factors which had their origins outside of the school milieu. In order to understand its growth, effectiveness and, perhaps controversial nature so that this new parental role can be dealt with positively and constructively both by school social workers and school administrators, we need first to understand its genesis and its relationship to cultural, political and philosophical change.

The desire for parent involvement in the education of their children emerged from the realization that these desires could be implemented. The model for this realization came from other groups which had experienced successfully that an organized attempt at voicing needs backed up by insistence that these needs be respected and met, served as an example to encourage parents to examine their rights. Demonstrations for freedom of choice by students, for civil rights by minorities, and for equal rights by women, all served as reinforcement to a consciousness that parents too are "customers" buying a service which they have a right to audit and have implemented within reasonable effective, and efficient programs. This includes the right to know, the right to participate, and the right to redress. Supported by strong advocacy positions parental interest in the educational milieu grew stronger, vocal, and overt. So that historically this is not an isolated occurrence but rather a concommitment position, within a societal change, that encouraged and supported the rights of participation of all heretofore silent and accepting groups.

Social workers within the school system realize that increasing parental involvement brings with it a new set of needs and responsibilities. Therefore, in stating a position of requisites to meet the challenge of an enlightened parental involvement, these needs would fall into three categories to which school social workers would have to relate dynamically: attitudinal needs, aptitude needs, and action needs.

In thinking first of attitudinal needs, we examine the existing model which formulated its function largely on crisis intervention which is based on the medical model and which says treat the disturbed child through the school health teams. The underlying assumption often emerged that the school is basically "all right" and the disturbed child is "not all right". The role of the school social worker therefore was to "fix up" the disturbed child and his family.

One of the major gaps resulting from this attitude is that it did not include a cooperative approach by parents in the process to treat the system. By this is meant a focus on new trends in school social work which exist in various areas, and are rapidly gaining support from both professionals and parents alike. A change in attitude focuses on the school social worker as "educator-trainer" who can therefore be effective in building the second requisite for enlightened parental involvement, namely, "APTITUDES" in parenting, and meaningful collaboration with those involved in the education of their children.

The school social worker can translate attitudinal change into the action level by increasing the aptitude of parents. But as a change agent in schools, the social workers must examine their personal attitudes which reflect a censuring quality against parents. "If if were not for the parents messing up the child, he would be fine!"

This impinges upon a larger system of problems which is the alienation existing amongst social workers, teachers, and administrators. As school social workers, we sometimes fail to understand the position and problems of our school colleagues and at times, misinterpret their attitudes. Such misunderstandings among professionals inhibit the development of parental involvement.

Creative social work intervention, mindful of the needs of parents to be educated and informed in order to be effectively involved, must seek to meet this need by emphasizing more than the traditional casework approach. Instead it should encourage an open door policy to the value and validity of parental contribution. More than that, we must encourage and train teachers to accept parent involvement and use it effectively.

We must also consider factors which impede our goals for parental involvement. Often large caseloads prevent school social workers from assisting school staff to develop attitudes and skills necessary for parent involvement. The result is, the medical model is more expedient, and although effectively carried through, still taps only a small portion of the school social worker's other competencies.

In addressing the goal of parents' involvement, a thrust towards a greater introspection into their own attitudes must take place. School social workers should be involved in leading educational programs for parents and school personnel to offer skills, to encourage cooperation, and to provide information regarding the rights and responsibilities of parent involvement.

To examine, in more detail, how the school social worker relates these needs to goals, it is important to think in terms of realities as well as possibilities. This means that "machinery" must be created through which parents can become effective. Effective involvement of parents creates their support for the school system as a whole, thereby justifying and validating the parents' presence.

The administrator is a vital person in the success of programs related to parent involvement. As such, the school social worker must be in a position to influence the administrator to support definite programs. The social worker, with skill in social process, must define and interpret to the administrator how parent involvement will add to the effectiveness of the school program. If the needs of the school, parents, teacher, and child were coordinated, administrators would develop a cooperative and supportive attitude towards parent involvement.

There is no better means to accomplish the goal of enhanced and effective parent involvement than by teaching communications skills, both to parents and teachers. This also would include the means by which parents could learn "political process", that is, politicize parents by teaching them how to be their children's advocate.

This view also carries with it the need and obligation to clarify and define when parents "should not" be involved. With more parent involvement in schools, parents should be made aware of the concept of confidentiality. There are some serious concerns that may arise out of parent involvement. For example, a small, organized, and powerful group can sometimes outweigh the balance of parents with less power and influence.

The questions arising would then be: Who owns the schools? How democratic should we be? Does parent involvement always have to be popular? Is it the ethical right that all parents be involved?

There are no unilateral answers to these questions, but the right of parent involvement would generally include mutual philosophical sharing of conflicting ideas, through the established school structure, so as to broaden the parents' opportunity of early entry into a position of influence into school affairs. This process should culminate with the ultimate involvement of parents in total school planning. School social workers should be aware that parents have multi-faceted roles and seek congruence between the home, the community, society and school. This points out the need for involvement by school personnel in community situations and social issues. The social worker is in the area of "overlap", between the school and the parent. In this area of mutual interest and cooperation, positive action for the child can result.

In looking towards future needs to which social workers might be responsive, it seems meaningful for the school, through the clinical team, to take a role in reaching out into the community to identify risk children and assist them to perform adequately in school. The philosophy should be oriented to parent involvement beginning as early as infancy to ensure early identification and programming for handicapped children.

There must be a continuous assessment of the role and priorities of the school. It is often the social worker's role to interpret family needs to the teacher and administrator, to act as an innovator to create new programs, and to utilize community resources. Another responsibility is to involve "uncommitted" parents in the education process.

Parent involvement need not be costly. It does require a reallocation of resources, particularly the time and energy of staff. If the school social worker is committed to the acceptance of parent involvement, then she can begin by utilizing existing resources within the school and community.

One means of including parents would be the creation of parent groups. These groups would prepare parents to participate as team members with teachers, administrators, and appraisal staff. In addition, problem solving groups should be formed to deal with actual difficulties which parents encounter in negotiating the system in behalf of their children. Curriculum planning groups would be a valuable means of educating parents to the school's functioning and their role in effective and skillful participation. Parent training groups can be effectively utilized with parents of handicapped children to provide support and to suggest methods of dealing with particular problems.

As part of its commitment to parent involvement the school should initiate a community outreach program. Agencies such as nursery schools, hospitals, welfare groups, civic, religious, and political organizations can provide resources for parents. The school social worker can help parents obtain the maximum benefit from these services. As part of this concept, the school should be seen as a resource where many non-teaching functions take place, such as social, political, health, and cultural projects.

In working with parents of handicapped children social workers can assist by providing specific information regarding the nature of handicapping conditions, the methods of identification, assessment and treatment, ways of dealing with the feelings and attitudes both of parents and children, available resources and services, and parents rights legislation and its implications.

Parents can be useful resources in a variety of ways. Parents can be utilized to help in "peer parenting" or they may act as "parent counselors". In an educational capacity parents may be used as volunteers, aides and tutors.

To assist parents in the early identification of children's problems the school should act as an enabler by inviting local resource people such as preschool educators, pediatricians, and public health nurses to share their knowledge and services. Concern for the parent must be system-wide, starting from the front office to the principal's desk.

In conclusion, school social workers have a creative role to play in the process of parent involvement. The privilege of involvement is philosophically, politically, and morally right, and often legally mandated. Therefore, school social workers must assume the commitment to welcome parent power and concern. With the welcome comes a responsibility to help parents become visible, vocal and viable advocates for their children.

REPORTING AND RECORDING OF SCHOOL RECORDS

A discussion of the purpose and content of case material including aspects of confidentiality and recent legislation concerning parents' right to know.

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REPORTING AND RECORDING OF SCHOOL RECORDS

Recent Federal legislation on school records has led school personnel to confront anew the many complicated issues surrounding their record keeping practices. School social workers view themselves as having crucial responsibilities in this regard. We are committed to the review and change of our own record keeping practices and to participation with other school staff in efforts to identify desirable record keeping goals systemwide. This paper will consider selected issues relevant to the school social worker's involvements in reporting and recording within the school setting. Essentially, we are concerned here with school records that are developed, maintained and communicated for purposes of providing appropriate learning experiences for individual pupils and for assisting the school in its overall educational planning.

Historically, schools have collected a variety of pupil information including identifying data, attendance records, health status charts, academic and behavior profiles as well as in-depth evaluations pertinent to selected pupils whose educational needs are considered exceptional or atypical. Although school social workers utilize and contribute to the development of all of these records, it is with the latter category that they are most involved. In these cases, the social worker usually prepares a written summary of the pupil's social functioning including home, school and community factors which seem to have influences upon the pupil's special educational needs. Social case materials may also indicate the resources available to pupils in relation to their identified needs and suggest strategies for enlisting these resources on behalf of the pupil. Observations, interviews and review of available records are the primary methods utilized in the development of these reports. While specific content varies from case to case, the social history for each pupil includes in-depth personal data which, when used judiciously, is very valuable to school staff, the pupil, and the family in addressing the unique educational needs of a given pupil.

For all their good and necessary uses, pupil records must exist. They must be utilized however, with great care. The entire process of reporting and recording is complex and fraught with hazard. As a greater quantity of information is compiled, the total prompts a dangerously more subjective impression. New and highly sophisticated storage and retrieval systems add yet another dimension for concern. All too frequently, school personnel, including school social workers, have sought and obtained pupil information without giving adequate consideration to the potential abuses associated with their record keeping practices.

In the case of Warden vs. Hayden (387 U.S., 294; 1967), Justice Douglas wrote:

> "The individual should have the freedom to select for himself the time and circumstances when he will share his secrets with others and decide the extent of that sharing."

Both the U.S. Constitution and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 seek to protect individuals from invasion of privacy. The latter has granted parents and older pupils access to their records and hence, the right to challenge the content. Thus, the consumer is now positioned as an active participant in matters of school records.

Social work values also emphasize the dignity of the individual, the individual's right to privacy and to self-determination. Present guidelines insist that the school social worker's professional committment to guaranteeing the rights of the client be fully exercised, while yet transmitting sufficient data for the use of other operants in the school system. Running commentary and subjective impressions included previously in written records must entirely give way to that information which is objective, verifiable, relevant and currently useful.

The gathering and dissemination of pupil information and the constraints upon privileged persons are shared concerns within the educational community. A review of current practices in light of these considerations will bring more clearly into focus the problems, the goals and the strategies which may prove useful in addressing these concerns.

The introduction of parent and pupil access to written records has resulted in extremes in practice. These range from avoidance of the issues and neglect of the development of new record keeping policies to the institution of procedures which fulfill the letter of the law without consideration for the effects on individuals and services. The social worker's recordings range from the behaviorally focused and objective to those which include unfair judgements, reflections of subjective feelings, biases and speculations based upon insufficient information.

While the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 mandates specific changes in record keeping practices, the alteration of existing methods will not be easily achieved. Just as the institutional character is self-perpetuating and resistant to change, so too is the character of the institution's representatives. Many social workers have been discomforted by new requirements that challenge a practice long accepted in social work and school settings - that of denying the consumer direct access to his own records. However, the new legislation should be viewed more as an opportunity than as a threat. It affords school social workers the opportunity to rethink their record keeping practices and to discard the unsound and outmoded.

In developing their written case materials, social workers will seek to include only objective, valid and verifiable data, observable behavior data sanctioned by parents and educationally relevant professional opinions. They will use language which is clear and concise, devoid of professional jargon. In providing data for planning and research, individuals and families will not be identified without their informed, written consent.

To effect the aforementioned, State Departments of Education, with input from parents and professionals in practice, will prepare guidelines for the development of sound and useful pupil records. School social workers will continuously review their own record writing practices through in-service and other training programs. They will attempt to specify the nature and scope of information to be included in social case materials. Social workers will also involve themselves with other school staff in refining interdisciplinary record keeping practices such that these will serve the best interests of pupils and families while at the same time meet the needs of the system. Social work state consultants, regional personnel and local social workers, through their affiliate organizations will work to change legislation when record keeping demands undermine sound professional practice. In addition, social workers will cooperate with school staff in their efforts to inform the school community of all policies relevant to pupil records.

In matters of confidentiality, the school social worker not only has a strong commitment towards protecting social case materials but also towards transmitting this value and related practices to the total school staff. Many school based professionals, non-professionals, volunteers and others have access to or may inadvertently see school records in the course of performing their duties. Thus, information which is considered confidential and private is subject to disclosure.

To provide maximum security for records, all schools are faced with the need to develop uniform guidelines on confidentiality. These guidelines will clearly state the means for sharing recorded information and will specify the requirement for written consent of the parent or adult student. All school-related individuals will be expected to treat pupil information in compliance with the school's stated policy and adopted guidelines.

In keeping with the concepts of consumer participation and self-determination, these policies and guidelines will be developed jointly by school staff and community persons, using legal and other state mandates as structural references for devising regulations that are pertinent to that specific school district. Local boards of education should subsequently publish and distribute to their communities handbooks of policies in which the system's position on confidentiality is clearly stated. Ongoing in-service programs for all school personnel will serve to acquaint staff with policies and regulations and will lead to greater awareness of the importance of the privacy of records. School social workers will seek ways to assist extensively in these efforts.

Writing in-depth social histories with information which has, until recently, been deemed necessary must now be reconsidered. The sharing of data which may include non-observable behavioral descriptions, violates principles of confidentiality if not specifically sanctioned by the client or if not labeled as subjective opinion by the professional. Except, in the rarest of cases, it is imperative that the school social worker commit to writing, only those materials that are relevant to educational planning and acceptable in content to parents and students.

To facilitate this, in-service training which provides experiences in writing objective, purposeful student records will be conducted. Collaboration between the social worker, pupil and parent in the preparation of written social case materials will promote the eventual incorporation of both pertinent and acceptable data in social case materials.

School social workers providing supervision for graduate students in field placements require that these students maintain detailed process recordings to indicate what has occured in the interaction between the trainee and client. Such records are used as teaching tools in highlighting the dynamics of the helping process. They assist the trainee in developing a style and a basic model for practice. An examination of the uses of process recordings in light of issues raised here, suggest that the very existence of these records is questionable. Disclosure could undermine their purpose and could be harmful to the trainee, the client, and to the educational system.

School social workers have a professional commitment to provide field placements for social work interns. In school settings these trainees should be considered an extension of the certified school employee rather than as a separate entity. Process recordings are valuable teaching tools, basic to the student's future practice. These recordings are to be viewed as the personal notes of the trainee, shared only with the professional employee serving as supervisor. Such notes shall not be part of the school records, nor perpetuated beyond the training period. The official record emanating from process recordings will be developed under supervision to comply with confidentiality considerations and the system's adopted guidelines on pupil records.

School social workers supervising trainees will need to clarify legal considerations within their districts and inform the involved parents and pupils regarding the ongoing training processes including the eventual development of pupil records. Parental objections to such involvements will be honored. Local policies should be shared with graduate schools sending trainees into placements so that they too can exercise choice in appropriateness of student placements relevant to the educational needs of their students.

Schools accumulate a variety of records on each child. These may be found in more than one location, thus complicating the task of coordinating information about an individual pupil. There may be no single person responsible for the security of records, nor for their periodic review and updating, including the deletion of materials no longer useful. Destruction of records may be achieved indiscriminately, or retention beyond usefulness may occur.

Accountability for the security of records is the responsibility of administration which is also responsible for insuring that records are accessible to all who have legitimate rights to them. It is imperative however, that all school staff share in this responsibility. Data must be kept current and reviewed continually to compare and note changes that have occured. Records no longer applicable or relevant should be destroyed. Implementation in this regard requires policy and procedural guidelines. School social workers will cooperate with others in developing policy positions, establishing criteria in connection with plans formulated and in similar supportive activities.

Current practices relevant to the provision of special educational services for selected students include the formulation of differential diagnoses based on the synthesis of findings of the various disciplines. The written record in these cases typically includes a labeling or categorization of the student. Such measures are part of the criteria for receipt of financial aid in many states. Social workers interacting in such situations observe time constraints, professional disagreements, interdisciplinary rivalry and personality clashes which sometimes lead to recommendations that are not in the best interests of specific pupils nor in tune with parental views and goals.

The social worker will be cognizant of the small group processes which occur in inter-disciplinary team operations and will initiate open communication on those issues which detract from professional responsibilities to children. Implementation of workshops on group processes applicable to team functioning will provide an appropriate means of addressing areas of difficulty. Similar workshops will be useful in helping team members to synthesize their fundings and summarize pupil needs succinctly in the written reports which are developed.

School social workers will seek to prevent the unnecessary and detrimental categorization of children when functioning under such constraints. Additionally, the social worker will seek to alter those financial aid practices which focus heavily upon labels rather than the declaration and description of pupil's unique educational needs. When the categorization of students is a mandated requirement for provision of services, the total school community should be actively involved in seeking new legislation using means most appropriate such as lobbying, letter writing, and various other political contacts.

There is a trend in education which is to view the child as the most important factor in his own functioning without questioning the functioning of the systems influencing his behavior. School social workers have a major responsibility for including in their written reports the environmental factors impacting upon the pupil's functioning. Careful consideration should be given to the influences of home, community and the school setting. While home and community factors are frequently incorporated in their reports, school social workers and other school based professionals tend to avoid mentioning in writing those factors which may be construed as critical of their own institution or of their co-workers. Although this issue is complicated and places the responsibility on the school social worker to know the school setting intimately, it is vital that observations relevant to the dysfunctional aspects of the school setting be addressed in recordings in the same detail and with the same restraints applied to the other factors presented.

The school social worker will find it important to cooperate with co-workers in the school and with community members in the continuing assessment of school practices and procedures to determine the effectiveness of the system in meeting the needs of its constituents. Public and open discussion including needs assessments and the development of goals on a non-crisis basis would seem to be imperative in this regard. As school and community representatives exercise their joint responsibilities in these areas, benefits will accrue for individual pupils and for the total educational system.

While this paper does not address macro-level reporting and recording, it should be noted that there is a need for school social workers to give equal consideration to reports and records which go beyond the needs of individual pupils. Annual reports, minutes of proceedings, task force reports and the like are important in identifying systems handicaps and contribute to a process of systems change. Such broad involvements serve valuable purposes for system, staff, pupils and community. Hence, greater attention should be given to this area of practice.

What logically unfolds for the school social worker as a future focus?

The written record insures the recognition of the client's needs and should indicate an awareness and protection of the client's rights. The requirements of current legislation lead us to re-examine existing practices and to discard those which no longer serve useful purposes. Social workers have been conditioned, by virtue of their training, to amass large quantities of client information and to engage in record keeping systems which may now present conflicts based on professional needs versus the rights of the individuals served.

In traditional social work practice, the checks and balances for the validity of the social work input into a record were found in the processes which occurred between the social worker and the client. The articulation of such a process was known as the "social case history." Extensive data, covering several years in some cases, served multiple purposes. Historically, the social case history has been condensed, based primarily on economic and administrative considerations. Now, arising out of the client's needs and rights, school social workers are finding it necessary to refine their recording and reporting methods.

In school settings, the "social work report" should integrate those processes which occur between the social worker, the school and the client. Its focus is essentially on enhancing the pupil's school functioning. Would not the rights and needs of our clients be better addressed if the social work report were to reflect only the most essential and relevant findings in the briefest possible summary statements derived from the above collaborative processes? The burden is upon the social worker and the system he represents to insure maximum growth of the individual student in a given cultural milieu. If what is committed to writing dealing with the life-space of that child does not address the development of maximum human potential and insure protection of that child, then it should not exist.

One who is part of a system can effectively become an agent of change within that system. The adoption of any policy or position cannot be seen as an end to a means, or as the completion of a task. The real challenge is to adopt positions which are developmental stages in an ongoing review and change process. We are obligated by our own perception of professional responsibility to thrust our efforts toward changing our own and the institution's present philosophies, policies and practices relevant to written records such that school records will provide sufficient and current information for required purposes while at the same time they will guarantee maximum consumer protection.

SOCIAL WORK SERVICE IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

A discussion of the special problems related to the elementary school age child and the role of the school social worker in assisting in the development of social skills. In addition, a review of school, home and community resources which can be utilized to maximize early learning experiences.

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SOCIAL WORK SERVICE IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

PHILOSOPHY

We, as school social workers, believe that the educational process should be a liberating force which enables the child to realize his potential. Since the school and the family are the major acculturating social institutions in our society, the child's school experience is crucial to his own individual growth as well as to the quality of his contribution to society at large. Because change is a naturally adaptive process in society and in individuals, schools must reflect societal change more quickly. Throughout these transitional stages the school social worker plays a facilitative and interpretive role.

The school social worker is concerned that the school transmit values, mores and traditions in a manner which is in harmony with the needs of the developing child who must take his place in a pluralistic society. The school system that provides alternative approaches to problem solving, enabling the child to develop the ability to make critical judgements that promote individuation and self actualization, is ensuring the continuance of a viable relevant active educational process. Thus, school and life experiences become congruent thereby breaking down the artificial barriers between education and living.

GOALS

As social workers face their jobs in a school setting, they are often confronted by unmet needs of pupils, teachers and administration. It is impossible to do everything. It is even futile to attempt to work on all tasks that conceivably fall within a social worker's province. Thus, it is necessary for school social workers to set priorities to give direction to their work and to achieve a sense of purpose. Stated goals also allow for accountability as workers assess their own work and as the system evaluates their contributions.

The school social worker on the elementary level enriches the resources in the educational environment and enhances the students' skills in using these resources to achieve expressed needs and established goals. Below, we have listed goals under five major areas which relate to (1) the special needs child, (2) the general school population, (3) dysfunctional stress situations, (4) school, home and community factors and (5) the promotion of a stimulating learning environment.

Recommended goals for the elementary school social worker are:

I. To provide services to the special needs child
    A. Early identification
    B. Ensure appropriate instructional services to meet specific academic needs
    C. Provide direct, consultative and referral services

II. To prepare school children for functional living in the present and future

   A. Explore the child's self-image through realistic self appraisal

   B. Provide an environment in which children may develop competence in group dynamics, cooperation and task orientation

   C. Increase the ability of students to plan, execute and evaluate age appropriate activities

   D. Develop communication skills with peers and adults

   E. Develop competency in the decision making process so that children can determine and select appropriate goals and strategies

III. To provide support for students during stressful situations

   A. Assist the child to evaluate the source(s) of stress

   B. Encourage self expression and the development of coping skills through individual and group work

IV. To identify, mobilize and develop school, home and community resources to assist students in realizing their fullest potential

   A. Improve relationships between home, school and community

   B. Develop parental and community participation in the school

   C. Identify and interpret the values, processes and programs of the school to the parents and the community

   D. Evaluate the family dynamics as it relates to the learning process and interpret this to the school

E. Communicate to the school system the value system, cultural milieu and needs of the community

F. Educate parents as to the availability of resources and facilitate the use or change of these

V. To provide the child with an enriching and stimulating learning environment

A. Stimulate motivation for learning through creative activities which are interesting to the child

B. Provide opportunities to develop more positive relationships with adults and other children

C. Structure the academic tasks so that the child can experience success

D. Increase child's utilization of learning resources outside of school

E. Encourage the teachers use of the child's outside experiences as a useful part of the classroom curriculum

The school social worker is responsible for assessing the extent to which specific goals have been met. The worker should learn how to set and write objectives, to specify procedures for achieving these objectives, to measure the changes that have occurred and to express them in language that has objective reliability and validity. Only through evaluation can we determine the benefits of social work intervention.

METHODS

Other disciplines working in a school setting will have differing concepts of the role of the school social worker. It is a primary need for school social workers to define the functions of their role and their degree of involvement.

To provide a more positive climate within the schools social workers may employ the following methods. Develop inter-personal relationships with bus drivers, crossing guards, custodial staff, lunch room aides, medical staff and teachers. Develop an understanding of the political system of the school and its power base. Develop a working relationship with parents, community, school board members and district offices.

Suggested methods for accomplishing these initial strategies might include:

I. In-service with school staff

    A. Workshops

    B. Teaching Classes

        1. Human Relations

        2. Sex Education

        3. Mental Health

        4. Child Development

    C. Classroom Demonstration on Child Management

    D. Providing Resource Material

        1. Group Dynamics

2. Understanding and acceptance of cultural differences
3. Values Clarification

II. Committee Participation

A. Curriculum
B. Special Service Teams
C. Parent Teacher Associations
D. Teacher Committees

It is important to work as a team since the input from all disciplines is necessary for individual educational planning.

III. Social Worker's Task on Evaluation Teams

A. Assess current socio-emotional functioning of the child
B. Secure Developmental and Family History
C. Provide recommendations for appropriate programming
D. Record keeping

IV. Utilize research data to support need for program changes or development of new programs

V. Direct Service with Children
A. Individual Case Work
1. Applied behavior therapy
2. Contracting
3. Counseling
4. Crisis intervention

B. Group Work
    1. Class meetings
    2. Group counseling or guidance
    3. Educational groups
    4. Crisis intervention with groups

C. Referrals to other community agencies or community facilities

Home is the first social and cultural environment for the child and is an integral part of his life. A social worker can act as a facilitator to point out alternatives and choices to families. Social workers can assist families in realizing their strengths and weaknesses as they participate in helping to improve their child's school progress. Social workers should encourage family involvement in the process of resolving a child's difficulties in school. Suggested methods for work with families:

I. Individual and Family Counseling
    A. Family contact
    B. Interpretation of testing results, school programs and progress

II. Parent Activity Groups
    A. Parents' Rights Groups
    B. Family rooms in schools
    C. Family activities and workshops
    D. Community organizations

III. Resources and Referral Services

A. Public welfare agencies

B. Health care facilities

C. Child and Family Guidance Centers

D. Day Care Centers

A school is an important part of the community. Since schools are financially supported by their communities it is necessary for community residents to be involved in planning and direction. The social worker can be one of the most powerful catalysts in bridging the gap between the school and community. Suggested methods for community outreach are:

I. Inform the community regarding current practices in educational assessment and programming

II. Referral and Involvement with existing community programs such as: Senior Citizen groups, AA, Planned Parenthood, Tutorial services, Parents Anonymous, Youth Service Agencies, Police Athletic League, Courts, Parks and Recreation, Group Homes, Child Welfare Agencies, Neighborhood Youth Corps, Churches and Ethnic Affiliated Groups.

III. Initiating interest in supporting and expanding the following programs: After school programs, mental health programs, self-help programs, parent advisory committees, PTA, PTO

IV. Provide group and individual consultation to the community as needed

V. Community Organization Activities

SUMMARY

The elementary school is often the earliest structured educational opportunity for children to be observed. In this environment potential or existing problems may first be identified.

The social worker in the elementary school has an opportunity to intervene at a crucial point in a child's development. These interventions may be provided through assessments, direct case and group work services, mobilization of school, home, and community resources and participation in educational program planning.

Through a sensitive understanding of the child and his parents and through support of teachers and educators, the elementary school social worker moves toward enabling all children to realize their fullest potential.

SOCIAL WORK SERVICE IN THE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

A discussion of the social-emotional needs of the emerging adolescent and the role of the school social worker in facilitating the adjustment and growth of the junior high school student.

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SOCIAL WORK SERVICE IN THE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Inherent in the social system of the middle or junior high school are educational, social and emotional needs typical of the emerging adolescent (children aged 11-15). Among the concerns confronting the young adolescent are the need to increase his academic skills as well as the need to develop autonomy, identity and sexuality.

In the middle school system, as in all large scale delivery systems, individual needs sometimes go unmet. These unmet needs are due to inappropriate facilities and alternative programs, an insufficient understanding of the distinctive dynamics of this age group, a lack in the delivery of specialized services, and the general and specific faults inherent in the middle school system itself.

The responsive posture of the educational system for addressing these unmet needs centers on the provision of specialized education for the training of competent and certified middle school administrators, teachers, and other preventive or remedial staff. The community's response to these unmet needs centers around the provision of tax-levied funds used by municipalities to purchase space and equipment for middle school children. This includes the development and maintenance of programs differentially designated to meet identified needs of handicapped students, i.e. resource rooms, EMR and TMR classrooms, classes for the brain-injured and emotionally disturbed, and mainstreamed classes based on individualized instruction.

Social Work Service

As a resource to the student, family, school, and community, social workers should view themselves as an integral part of the total educational plan. With their specialized training and experience, social workers are skilled as change agents when the usual stresses of adolescence cause serious school-related adjustment problems. Here, the social worker can deal with emotional disturbances, family breakdowns, physical illness, special handicapping conditions, poverty, poor housing, delinquency, anti-social behavior, racial tensions, and other community problems. The variety of specialized skills and methods used by social workers in this process includes:

1. Counseling students and parents, either individually or collectively
2. Referring students and families to community resources and agencies
3. Utilizing and mobilizing community resources to coordinate with the school system
4. Child Advocacy
5. Opening communications and negotiating agreements between students, staff, parents, peers and community agencies

6. Contributing to the decision making process in programming for handicapped children.

Immediate Unmet Needs in Service Delivery

The selection of particular intervention strategies should be tailored to fit the circumstances and special needs of individual referrals. These strategies should address the unmet needs in service delivery including:

1. The need for interdisciplinary training
2. The need for alternative programs for children with learning problems or more serious handicapping conditions
3. The need for opportunities and facilities to allow children to interact informally with peers and adults

There exists immediate need for interdisciplinary training as a vehicle for sharpening skills and improving service delivery to this special group. This inter-disciplinary growth experience should involve all who deal with the young adolescent in the school setting, including custodians, cashiers, lunchroom cooks, and all professional and non-professional ancillary and supportive staff. This training and growth experience should include staff workshops, T-groups, peer group counseling, lectures, films, and parent association meetings.

An immediate benefit of this training would be the realization on the part of all middle school children that there exists at least one person in the school setting who really cares about them individually as people. Each student is important, in the sense that if we miss one student, that student may have untapped social utility beyond the imagination of the most optimistic of us. Further benefits from this experience and training should lead to better communications, understanding, and respect for the students, parents, grandparents, specialists, peers, youth services, hospitals, courts, law enforcement agencies, business communities, and all others who have contact with the middle school child.

Another immediate service gap is the lack of sufficient alternative programs for the slow learner and the child with more serious handicapping conditions. There should be improvement, initiated at an administrative level, for identifying and formulating programs to realistically meet the needs of those children not easily absorbed into the mainstream of regular public school education.

A final immediate unmet need in the middle school is the lack of physical space for children to come together to exchange ideas and spend time with peers or adults. This physical space should be quiet and comfortable and removed from the formal classroom setting.

Long Range Needs and Goals

To effect long range change in the provision of school social work services, it is necessary to initiate systematic intervention into the educational system that is based on long range planning and reflective of both existing service levels and optimum service levels based on evaluations of school social work state-of-the-art surveys.

There is a significant need to provide for smooth transitions between the elementary and junior high schools. Representing an arbitrary separation of the seventh-grader from familiar and comfortable surroundings, the junior high school brings with it new demands for mature behavior, peer approval, and academic success. There is, consequently, a need to devise and utilize techniques to make the junior high school a friendlier and more accepting environment. To help create this environment, classes should be conducted in the beginning weeks with the aim of helping children foster friendships and gain security. Classroom meetings, values clarification, and sensitivity techniques can be aides in creating such an atmosphere. Reduced expectation for academic performance during the initial weeks of school could also help to decrease student anxiety. Big Brother and Big Sister programs could also be utilized in an effort to reduce alienation and to enhance feelings of warmth, relatedness and belonging. This could include use of junior high school students working with elementary school students as well as senior high and college students working with middle school students.

There is also a need to plan, develop, and organize additional programs within the junior high school to meet the needs of the handicapped student. There has been much reliance on the transportation of special needs students to other school districts and to private schools for special education programs. An alternative is to provide special programs within the existing building to service these children so that they may take part in the regular curriculum and interact with normal peers whenever possible.

Consideration of expanding vocational resources and possible apprentice programs to serve junior high school students should also be encouraged. Frequently handicapped students demonstrate real strength in the performance skills and should be given the opportunity to test and experience their strengths and skills at this level. It is important, however, not to lock handicapped students into purely vocational tracks.

In looking into the future of school social work in the middle school system, there is a need to determine the validity of the middle school concept. To accomplish this task an independently funded research project should be established in cooperation with State Departments of Education. The following information should be obtained:

1. An evaluation of the social, emotional and educational needs of this age group
2. An analysis of existing state laws related to education
3. An examination of alternative approaches to the middle school concept

4. A review of the current middle school system
5. Recommendations for a more responsive and comprehensive educational program for each child.

This research study would serve a two-fold purpose; it would have immediate local impact to effect change and influence local thinking regarding the middle school system as a viable public school institution; and it would provide an impetus for further studies regarding the role of the middle school in the public school system. Research results should be distributed to the community and local school system, as well as to State Departments of Education.

The school social worker should become a more active and integral part of the total school functioning. This would entail changing the social worker's (time) priorities to allow more involvement with school personnel, resulting in less time in the office and more communication in the teacher's room, lunch room, and more interaction with administrative personnel. The school social worker should also be used as a resource for classroom instruction in affective education, i.e. teaching lessons and leading discussions on feelings, social relationships, psychology, and sex education. In order to provide these services, legislation should be expanded to support, encourage and increase school social work services.

Social workers should help to develop a deeper understanding and appreciation of their roles and responsibilities in working with other school professional and ancillary personnel. School social workers and teachers should be involved in pre-service programs in Schools of Education and Schools of Social Work.

Increased and expanded roles for school social workers are also dependent on the attitudes and priorities of school system administrators. As primary decision-makers, administrators are responsible for the total atmosphere of the school and are responsible for ensuring that necessary programs are available for both academic and affective education. Social workers can promote the growth of affective education by encouraging administrators to adopt a supportive attitude toward an open, flexible system and to enlist the support and expertise of other school disciplines and community personnel.

To encourage this development social workers and administrators should examine the changing roles of all involved in the middle school system. This can be accomplished through workshops, study groups and parent-teacher groups which would explore the planning of alternative programs. In order to achieve innovative programs social workers can assist school administrators by introducing new ideas and working with the community to secure sources of funding.

Summary

In summary social workers are involved in the middle school on three levels. One is direct service and counselling of students and their families, another is cooperation and communication with community agencies, and the third is active involvement with administration and other school professionals toward the goal of providing a responsive and comprehensive educational program for each child.

SOCIAL WORK SERVICE IN THE HIGH SCHOOL

A discussion of directing school social work efforts toward a cooperative delivery system which views the school as a social and educational institution.

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SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK SERVICE IN THE HIGH SCHOOL

Effective school social work services in public schools support the professional principles, ethics and values of the NASW and of the National Teachers Organizations. Prevailing high school social work practice tends to be clinical and crisis oriented and limited to individual or small group intervention. While social work has been effective in meeting individual needs by using casework and group work methods, the success of these methods is limited. A more comprehensive utilization of the knowledge and skills available to school social workers is obviously needed.

As a result of education, training and experience, the high school social worker has knowledge of interrelationships and interactions which can help to facilitate awareness of, and responsiveness to the collective needs of students, faculty, and the community. The high school social worker also has skills in the areas of casework, group work, administration, consultation and community organization.

School social work must address itself to the needs of the school as a social institution, as well as an educational one. The practice of social work in any school setting is rooted in the concept that its role is to aid in providing an appropriate and effective education for all children. School social work efforts must be directed toward developing and enabling a unified, cooperative delivery system which helps to create a viable social and educational environment. Such a system must reflect the traditional values of the social work profession which emphasize individual worth, and which recognize the right for self-determination and responsibility.

Since the educational system is responsible for the education of all children, the goals of the social worker in the high school must be examined in relation to student needs. Included among these are the following:

1. The need for students to value themselves
2. The need for students to communicate more effectively
3. The need for students to develop self-supporting life skills
4. The need for students to identify their educational priorities
5. The need for students to identify their responsibilities to their families, school and communities

The school social worker must establish task priorities in order to be effective in meeting student needs. These priorities may include:

1. Redefinition of the role of the school social worker
2. Negotiation with administration regarding a definitive job description
3. Participation with other school personnel in evaluation of an educational system to meet student's needs

4. Communication with all relevant levels of the school and community
5. Participation and collaboration on interdisciplinary teams

An integral, and often neglected aspect, of school social work is program evaluation. The in-depth study of both process and product, can assist the school social worker to establish and to modify priorities and intervention strategies. Program evaluation must be an ongoing process which includes the examination of the qualitative and quantitative aspects of school social work services.

The goal of the high school social worker is to assist in the development of socially-equipped students. Such a goal requires that students, as they terminate their formal public education, understand their environment, and find a suitable way to live comfortably within their community.

At best, current service achieves only a portion of this goal. Most service remains crisis-oriented, and provides individual service following the traditional clinical model, which views the students as responsible for his own plight. The social system does not accept any responsibility for creating or resolving the problem. School social workers are now beginning to make contributions to the school, as a social system which has an impact on students in respect to their academic achievement, social behavior and life skills. Understanding the social system and its effect on students, allows the school social worker to have impact on the total school population, including, but not limited to, students with special needs.

The following are three specific service goals towards which the high school social worker must work:

1. Development of the high school as a more productive environment
2. Maximization of the potential of all students
3. Working with the administration in providing transitional services to students once they leave high school

In order to be more effective in meeting the needs of high school students, the school social worker should:

1. Work toward developing a feedback system with school administration
2. Participate on committees such as student advisory boards and vocational planning groups
3. Provide input to teams regarding the socio-emotional aspects of adolescence and suggest ways of providing comprehensive services
4. Provide assistance to staff through classroom observation and consultation, and inservice training
5. Participate in community affairs in order to foster a liaison between the school and the community
6. Work toward parent involvement and child advocacy so that the students rights and responsibilities are safeguarded
7. Work directly with students in formal and informal groups, through the use of mini groups and peer counselling

8. Foster an understanding and acceptance of the characteristics and needs of handicapped students

9. Assist handicapped students and their parents to plan for post graduate adjustment

The development of a more positive high school environment requires that the social worker clearly understand practical limitations. A needs assessment must ask:

1. What services are currently being provided?
2. What are major gaps in service?
3. What kind of educational system do staff, students and community want?
4. What resources are available?
5. What type of delivery system is necessary to achieve service goals?

In conducting a needs assessment, there are several directions one may take. One alternative is to enlist the aid of an external professional service. Another is for school personnel, including the school social worker to implement their own needs assessment. In order to develop major change, the Board of Education must be involved. The school social worker can assist in communicating to the Board the priorities and needs of the high school system to facilitate the Board's understanding and enlist its support.

It is necessary that high school social workers become involved in restructuring of the high school as a social system, in order to maximize the potential of all its students. The structural change of any social system requires a comprehensive evaluation of existing resources. The improvement and redirection of high school programs in order to realize student potential need not necessarily require additional financial investment. Numerous existing school resources can be modified or adapted.

High school social service has had limited success in meeting the needs of students because of its crisis-oriented approach which is too narrowly focused, and has little long term or remedial benefit to the educational system or its students.

School social service must expand its scope to include techniques which effect systems change. The goal of such system change is the development of the high school as a social, as well as an educational institution, better able to meet the needs of students.

A NOTE ON THE PAPERS

From the process of group collective writing four common areas of concern were identified: 1) the need for school social workers to define the nature and scope of their role, 2) the need to establish priorities and define strategies, 3) the need for participation within an interdisciplinary approach and, 4) the need for parent involvement on all levels.

Because the papers represent group consensus, they fail to highlight the varied viewpoints which emerged during the discussions of issues. Participants attempted to deal with such questions as: how do school social workers set priorities in their work with handicapped children, what skills and competencies must they develop in order to maximize their effectiveness, what strategies and techniques are appropriate, and how can school social workers establish needed linkages between the school and community agencies which would promote integrated services to handicapped children?

No one conference is intended to resolve these issues. There is an apparent need for school social workers to continue to engage in focused discussions on the critical issues raised in these workshop groups.

EVALUATION OF THE NORTHEASTERN CONFERENCE FOR SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS

Saratoga Springs, New York
November 19, 20, and 21, 1975

Conducted by

THE NORTHEAST REGIONAL RESOURCE CENTER
and
THE NEW YORK REGIONAL RESOURCE CENTER

I. INTRODUCTION

Northeastern Conference for School Social Workers sponsored by the Northeast and New York Regional Resource Centers, was held in Saratoga Springs, New York on November 19, 20, and 21, 1975. Ninety (90) school social workers attended this meeting with the majority of participants coming from Connecticut, New Jersey and New York but including as well representatives from Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Rhode Island. The following is an evaluation of the conference based on evaluation forms completed by participants and facilitators as well as observations and discussions held with participants and planners during and following the conference.

A. Purpose of the Conference

The aim of this conference was as follows:

1) to provide school social workers in the Northeast with an opportunity to exchange ideas on philosophy and practice.

2) to prepare position papers on selected topic areas in the

field of school social work which would be compiled into a monograph and distributed in the eight northeastern states.

B. Format of the Conference

Participants were asked to submit a pre-conference two page abstract addressing one of 10 suggested topic areas. From these abstracts participants were selected and placed into one of ten workshop groups that corresponded as closely as possible to their topic area.

During the conference each group worked with the aid of a facilitator to exchange ideas on philosophy and practice and to write a position paper on their particular topic area. Each paper was to address itself both to philosophy and practice and to include the following subareas: description of present practice, goals for service, and strategies or means to obtain these service goals.

II. SUMMARY OF PARTICIPANTS' EVALUATION

The following represents an evaluation of the conference activity based upon the participants' responses to the Conference Evaluation Form. Participants' were asked to evaluate the following areas: A) Facilitator Effectiveness B) Workshop Format and Activity C) Comments on Outstanding Features and D) Suggestions for Change and/or Follow-up. All ninety (90) participants' responded to the questionaire. However, it should be noted that while most of them completed the entire evaluation, a small per cent of participants did not respond to all of the questions. The percentages listed here are based on the number of responses obtained.

Participants were asked to evaluate on a point continuum with number 1 being the highest and number 5 the lowest. For the purpose of this summary we are reporting the per cent of participants who responded in the high range of 1 and 2. i.e. Above average.

A. Facilitator Effectiveness

1) 78 participants or 87% felt that facilitator leadership was consistent with program objectives.

2) 82 participants or 91% felt that the facilitators were effective in involving participants in the task.

3) 73 participants or 81% felt that the facilitator was receptive and responsive to participants' ideas.

4) 63 participants or 70% felt that the facilitators were skilled in group process.

B. Workshop Format and Activity

1) 45 participants or 50% felt that the purpose of the conference was clearly and adequately stated.

2) 42 participants or 46% felt that the work load was demanding for the time allotted to complete the task.

3) 43 participants or 47% felt that the conference activity helped to improve their ability to think and analyze.

4) 55 participants or 61% felt that the conference as a whole was above average in comparison to other conferences they had attended.

5) 74 participants or 82% felt that the conference objectives were met.

6) 86 participants or 95% felt the conference provided for a useful exchange of idea.

C. Outstanding Features

Among the outstanding features noted by the participants are the following:

1) The ability of people from varying backgrounds working together to accomplish a novel, demanding task.

2) The willingness, openness and cooperation of people

in groups.

3) Learning about the various directions and activities of social workers in different states.

4) It was interesting and exciting to engage in a problem solving task.

5) It was fascinating to watch the group dynamics and process of peer problem solving.

6) It was rewarding to be able to reassess and reclarify school social work practice and philosophy.

7) Crackerbarrel Sessions were excellent, informative and stimulating.

8) The workshop topics selected were challenging and relevent.

9) The workshop groups provided an opportunity to test out processes, activities and philosophy with other professionals and receive feedback, ideas and support.

10) The Facilitators were outstanding.

11) Coming away with many new ideas for school social work practice.

12) "Our task was interesting and meaningful and I have grown from this experience."

13) The conference provided some insight into how the school team is operating.

14) Participants in the group were stimulating, high caliber professionals.

15) The location for the conference, The Gideon Putnam Hotel in Saratoga Springs, New York was ideal providing a comfortable, pleasant atmosphere conducive to work.

16) The conference provided an opportunity to examine the impact of social work service on the educational system.

D. Suggestions for Change

1) More time to accomplish the task

2) More prior information including the outline for the paper, the schedule, and the workshop group people would be assigned to

3) More opportunity to exchange personal and professional experiences and to share abstracts

4) Have available duplicating and secretarial services

5) Have a different format for the position paper. Some participants suggested that it be made clearer - that

it was too ambiguous. Others felt it was too specific and too restrictive.

E. Suggestions for Follow-Up

1) Within each state a need on local levels with the assistance of state associations to disseminate ideas of school social worker practice discussed at the conference throughout the northeastern states

2) Cooperation with NASW in planning and carrying out this kind of activity

3) Distribution of the monograph

4) A mailing of names and addresses of all participants to allow for continued exchange of ideas and contracts

5) Continue sharing information across states by conducting another regional conference next year

III. SUMMARY OF FACILITATORS' EVALUATION:

Facilitators were asked to evaluate the conference in a narrative form responding to six questions. The following represents a summary of their responses.

1) Was the pre-workshop planning for this activity adequate?

Most felt that the preparation and planning for the activity was extensive and well organized. Especially helpful was the facilitator training session held in New York and the pre-conference meeting held in Saratoga Springs.

Two suggestions for change were:

a) More conference material and information should be mailed to participants prior to the conference including position paper outline and workshop group assignments.

b) Facilitators would like to be involved in the preparation of position paper outline.

2) What were the goals of the activity and were they accomplished?

Facilitators understood that the basic goal of the conference was to prepare a position paper on their topic area and to organize the group's activity and discussion toward that goal. They reported that this task was accomplished as evidenced by the production of a paper from each workshop group.

3) Do you feel you were effective as a leader? If not, why?

All felt that they were effective as leaders because their groups became involved in the activity and successfully produced a position paper.

4) What do you see as appropriate follow-up?

Suggestions included:

a) Forming a committee of participants and facilitators to discuss the format for a future conference next year

b) Final editing of the monograph

c) State and local meetings to discuss the publication

d) Distribution of the monograph

IV. NORTHEAST REGIONAL RESOURCE CENTER AND NEW YORK REGIONAL RESOURCE CENTER EVALUATION

A, Outstanding Features

The Northeast and New York Regional Resource Centers feel that the conference was a productive, successful activity. School Social Workers from various states came together to work as a group to develop position papers on various aspects of school social work practice. This activity was designed to encourage Social Workers as a group to define their role, philosophy and activities; and to promote a sharing of new ideas and support for current issues and concerns. This kind of sharing and collective thinking was seen as a means to enhance social work practice to better serve the needs of handicapped children in the educational system.

The task analysis format of the conference was a new concept. It was unique in that it involved a collective group effort toward problem solving geared to the completion of a specific task, i.e. the writing of position papers on selected topic areas of school social work practice. Most participants had not previously been involved in such an activity and as a result commented on the amount of effort, time and energy required to fulfill this task. However, most groups felt that the experience was extremely rewarding as it provided an opportunity to exchange ideas, to participate and gain skills in a new kinds of group process, to receive valuable feedback for their own activities and to contribute to the general field of social work practice by developing a collective statement of their current ideas regarding philosophy and practice.

B. Facilitator Effectiveness

From the written evaluations of both participants, facilitators, and planners as well as from observations and discussions, the dynamic of facilitator effectiveness appears to be a key element in the operation of the workshop groups. Similar questions regarding the task were raised by members across groups. The most effective facilitators were the ones who settled issues early and provided a structure that facilitated movement. Their group accomplished their task on schedule, provided free time for their members to exchange information on personal and professional experiences, and rated the conference in high terms across all categories. These groups consistently reported that they felt this was an outstanding, valuable experience and that they were proud of their accomplishment and wished to share it with others. Those groups who had difficulty settling initial questions and deciding upon how to effectively approach the task, were more aware of time constraints, had less opportunity to exchange personal information and were less effective in arriving at consensus.

C. Recommendations for Change and/or Follow-up

There was not as much agreement on the clarity of purpose as one would have preferred. The problem appeared to be that some participants did not clearly understand the use of the abstracts. The abstracts were intended to serve as a basis for selection and placement of the participants in workshop groups. However, the conferences for the two previous years had in fact used the abstracts as a basis for discussion and production of a monograph and though the application did state the new format, many participants came to the conference anticipating the old format. Therefore, in future conferences of this nature it is necessary to make sure that the application is clearer in describing the workshop format and that more pre-conference material be sent to participants including workshop group placement, the outline for the position paper and a schedule of activities.

There is also a need to rethink the application procedure. Instead of an abstract it is possible that applicants to the conference could simply check off from a list the workshop in which they would like to participate. Though the facilitators would not then have prior information about each participants' particular philosophy and activities, the application procedure would be direct and the participants would then be free to concentrate on the task at hand.

In addition a few participants raised the point that they were placed in workshop groups they had not originally chosen. Some switching was done in an effort to include these people in the conference when the workshop group of their choice had been closed. Not all of those switched were notified of the change. A consistent notification procedure should be followed in future conferences. In addition, another option might be to simply reduce the number of workshop groups when only a few people have indicated interest in them rather than to keep them open by switiching additional people.

A revision of the outline should be considered. Though comments ranged from "too general" to "too specific", the language of the outline should be clearer to highlight the three main areas of interest in the workshop papers:

1) existing philosophy and practice

2) goals for service

3) means or strategies to achieve service goals

In addition, it would be helpful to include facilitators in the revision of the outline.

D. General Comments

The conference was held for two and one half days. During that time participants worked steadily for long periods including two evening sessions. Some groups worked beyond the sessions that were scheduled. It is felt that given the nature and scope of the task that people would have benefited from an additional day's time.

The conference was truly a unique, stimulating experience. It succeeded in having school social workers working together to come up with some collective thinking that reflected an expression of their contributions and aspirations for service to children and their families. It is not a definitive statement of the art. It was not intended to be. It was intended as an opportunity to encourage school social workers to examine their roles and activities, to describe their commonalities and differences, and to share their current thinking with others in the educational system as well as those in their own field.

It is felt that participants were successful in completing their task and producing position papers which will be shared, read, commented upon and hopefully serve to spur additional thinking in the field of school social work and in the service to children with special needs.

In terms of follow-up, Northeast and New York Regional Resource Centers are distributing copies of this monograph to be shared with school social workers and other educational personnel through the State Associations of School Social Work in New Jersey, Connecticut and New York as well as through the State Departments of Education in Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, and Vermont.

In addition the Regional Resource Centers will consider sponsoring future regional and local activities related to the development of appraisal or programming skills of school social workers in the Northeastern regions.

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